

RICE UNIVERSITY

**Social Memory and
Nineteenth-Century British Historical Fiction**

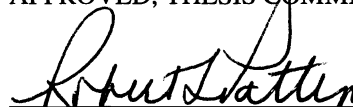
by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Doctor of Philosophy

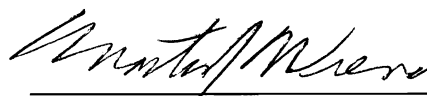
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DECEMBER 2010

ABSTRACT

Social Memory and Nineteenth-Century British Historical Fiction

by

Kara G. Marler-Kennedy

This dissertation examines the representation of social memory in British historical fiction from 1810 to 1880. I argue that social memory is crucial to the analysis of historical fiction during this period because it affords us an opportunity to see how authors in the nineteenth century viewed the social dimensions of memory as constructed by communities that envision their pasts in relation to prevailing ideologies and dominant authorities. Specifically, literary representations of social memory are important in understanding how communities come together to achieve common goals or resist dominant authorities through their sense of a common past in one of the most popular genres of nineteenth-century literature, the historical novel. The significance of social memory for the study of nineteenth-century British historical novels centers in the fact that it reveals the processes by which kinship or kindred groups and other social groups can be formed and by which historical consciousness is developed and communicated among those groups within the novel and to the reader.

Social memory is defined here as a shared vision of the past, its narratives, and its symbols that embodies the cultural and communal influences on an individual's and broader group's contemporary identity. Social memory can represent a positive, unifying

force in an individual's life and a community's day-to-day lived experiences, a force that can be used to achieve common purposes or resist common foes. The activation of social memory, though, offers a paradox: on the one hand, individuals are united by a powerful sense of togetherness as understood by their relationship to the past and its significance to their present, lived experience; yet, on the other hand, individuals may resist this totalizing or homogenizing sense of the past when it threatens the uniqueness of individual subjectivity, specific characteristics of group culture, or forecloses on the possibilities of social action by those on the margins. This dissertation looks at how social memory is represented in non-canonical and canonical historical novels by Sir Walter Scott, Anthony Trollope, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, George Eliot, and Philip Meadows Taylor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation explores the nature of communal bonds created out of a shared sense of the past. It makes sense, then, to acknowledge my own past and present bonds and debts that made the completion of the project possible. To my co-directors, Drs. Robert L. Patten and Helena Michie, I owe especial thanks. Their attentive and close reading of this work over the years has been invaluable, from the earliest working through of what mourning and trauma might have meant in the nineteenth century to the later discussions about how memory becomes critical both to individual and group identity. I am also thankful for the moments when those conversations moved beyond the geographical and temporal borders of nineteenth-century Britain to include the role of memory in issues facing the twenty-first century and our ever-changing visions of the past. Thanks are also owed to Dr. Martin J. Wiener whose questions and comments on the dissertation have made me think more deeply about historiography's role in shaping nineteenth-century British literature and culture.

I am grateful to acknowledge the support of a Dissertation Writing Fellowship from the Humanities Research Center at Rice University. The community of fellows for that year, made up of men and women in the departments of religious studies, history, and anthropology, were instrumental in helping me to think about this project in interdisciplinary terms.

Once again, I am pleased to thank my parents for their continual encouragement. And, once again, I am delighted to dedicate this project to Jeremy Kennedy. We have been together for one half of our lives now. I am happy to share so much of the past and present with you, and I look forward to a future built upon the happiest of memories.

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INTRODUCTION

Farewell all social memory! all thoughts
 In common! and sweet bonds which link old friendships,
 When the survivors of long years and actions,
 Which now belong to history, soothe the days
 Which yet remain by treasuring each other,
 And never meet, but each beholds the mirror
 Of half a century on his brother's brow,
 And sees a hundred beings, now in earth,
 Flit round them, whisp'ring of the days gone by,
 And seeming not all dead, as long as two
 Of the brave, joyous, reckless, glorious band,
 Which once were one and many, still retain
 A breath to sigh for them, a tongue to speak
 Of deeds that else were silent—save on marble—
 Oime! Oime!—and must I do this deed?

—George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice: An Historical Tragedy* (1821)¹

In Act 3, scene ii of Lord Byron's (1788–1824) *Marino Faliero*, the Doge throws in his lot with a group of conspirators seeking to overthrow the Venetian Senate, which the Doge feels has insulted him and overreached its authority against the people of Venice. When asked by one of the conspirators the degree to which mercy should be shown to members of the ruling nobility, the Doge vacillates in his answer. He finally exclaims that he is willing ruthlessly to sever the social ties he has with certain members of the ruling class in order to avenge the wrong he has suffered by the Venetian Senate's decision to sentence Michele Steno only to one month of imprisonment after the latter's insult against the Doge's honor and his wife's reputation. His participation in the coup

¹ George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice: An Historical Tragedy* (1821) (Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1821), pp. 124–25, Act III, scene ii.

d'état combines both private grief with the public's desire for redress and broader social freedoms. As he proclaims before the conspirators:

You are met
 To overthrow this monster of a state,
 This mockery of a government, this spectre,
 Which must be exorcised with blood, and then,
 We will renew the times of truth and justice,
 Condensing in a fair free commonwealth
 Not rash equality but equal rights,
 Proportion'd like the columns to the temple,
 Giving and taking strength reciprocal,
 And making from the whole with grace and beauty,
 So that no part could be removed without
 Infringement of the general symmetry.
 In operating this great change, I claim
 To be one of you—if you trust in me.²

The Doge expresses, in both passages above, a shift in his allegiance from a bloated aristocratic class to the people.

² Byron, pp. 116–17, Act III, scene ii.

By drawing upon a different manifestation of “social memory” than that which he and the nobles had forged, Marino Faliero calls upon a past designed to lend legitimacy to the movement of the present. As Charles Barker writes in an 1829 review of the play, “Around him flit the recollection of times, so long ago ‘they are a doubt in the memory,’ though ‘they live in annals;’ and all that is great either in his own story, or that of the republic, is assiduously present to his mind. The mighty of the days of old appear to surround him, and in thought he stands ever in the presence of the great spirits, whose ashes are shrunk to a handful, but whose memory is abroad on the earth.”³ In other words, “the long past is invoked to behold and assist” in the formation of a new Venetian society.⁴

In the end, the Doge is unsuccessful. He is sentenced to die, and in some histories and Byron’s play, he receives the ancient pronouncement of *damnatio memoriae*, a punishment in which the name of the accused is struck from the historical record and from social memory altogether.⁵ The sentence, though, seems to have been ineffectual considering the Doge’s presence in subsequent historical and cultural accounts.⁶ Indeed,

³ Charles Barker, “Lord Byron and M. Casimir Delavigne,” *The Foreign Quarterly Review* 4 (August 1829): 470–83, 473.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Bo Earle, “Byronic Measures: Enacting Lordship in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and *Marino Faliero*,” *ELH* 75.1 (Spring 2008): 1–26, 22–23.

⁶ Charles W. Hedrick, Jr., notes that the practice of *damnatio memoriae* often has a paradoxical effect different from the erasure of memory that those who pronounce the sentence may desire: “The *damnatio memoriae* does not work to negate the evidence of the past, but to produce new signs of it.” See his *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2000), p. xii.

before his death in the play, the Doge declares that “They cannot quench the memory of those / Who would have hurl’d them from their guilty thrones / And such examples will find heirs, though distant.”⁷ Byron notes in his Preface to the play that it is the attempt to erase the Doge from history that first attracts him to the Doge’s story: “The black veil which is painted over the place of Marino Faliero amongst the doges, and the Giant’s Staircase, where he was crowned, discrowned, and decapitated, struck forcibly upon my imagination, as did his fiery character and story.”⁸ Byron is also drawn to the story of the Doge because of its potential role in the burgeoning nationalist movements taking place in Italy throughout the nineteenth century with which he was sympathetic. His use of the phrase “social memory” in the drama is significant because it gestures toward broader cultural concerns with the social dimensions of memory articulated by men and women in nineteenth-century British literature and culture.⁹ He presents, in other words, an early formulation of a concept that draws together memory and history, affect and imagination, the past and the present for cultural, aesthetic, and political purposes.

This dissertation examines the representation of social memory in British historical fiction from 1810 to 1880. I argue that social memory is crucial to the analysis of historical fiction during this period because it affords us an opportunity to see how

⁷ Byron, p. 173, Act IV, scene ii.

⁸ Byron, “Preface,” *Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice*, pp. iii–xviii, vi.

⁹ The early reviews of the play, while not ebullient in their praise—*The Edinburgh Review*, in fact, deemed it “a failure, both as a Play and a Poem”—frequently singled out this passage by the Doge for positive commentary. It is, in fact, one of the most quoted passages in the early reviews. See, for instance, Barker, p. 478; and reviews in *The Monthly Review* 96 (May 1821): 41–50, 45; *The North American Review* 13 (July 1821): 227–46, 236; and *The Edinburgh Review* 35.70 (July 1821): 271–85, 271 (for the quotation here in the note) and 278.

authors in the nineteenth century viewed the social dimensions of memory as constructed by communities that envision their pasts in relation to prevailing ideologies and dominant authorities. Specifically, literary representations of social memory are important in understanding how communities come together to achieve common goals or resist dominant authorities through their sense of a common past in one of the most popular genres of nineteenth-century literature, the historical novel. The significance of social memory for the study of nineteenth-century British historical novels centers in the fact that it reveals the processes by which kinship or kindred groups and other social groups can be formed and by which historical consciousness is developed and communicated among those groups within the novel and to the reader.

Social memory is defined here as a shared vision of the past, its narratives, and its symbols that embodies the cultural and communal influences on an individual's and broader group's contemporary identity. Social memory can represent a positive, unifying force in an individual's life and a community's day-to-day lived experiences, a force that can be used to achieve common purposes or resist common foes. The activation of social memory, though, offers a paradox: on the one hand, individuals are united by a powerful sense of togetherness as understood by their relationship to the past and its significance to their present, lived experience; yet, on the other hand, individuals may resist this totalizing or homogenizing sense of the past when it threatens the uniqueness of individual subjectivity, specific characteristics of group culture, or forecloses on the possibilities of social action by those on the margins. Karl Marx (1818–83) in his

Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1852), for instance, found the totalizing force of the past often to be detrimental to the progress of social groups. He wrote that

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem to be engaged in the revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.¹⁰

The historical novel draws attention both to the value and at times unbearable weight of the past by making the ways in which memory manifests, is collectivized, imposed, manipulated, articulated, and narrativized apparent to the reader. In this way, the

¹⁰ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) (Rockville MD: Wildside Press, 2008), p. 15. Numerous translations of this text are available, some more eloquent than others. Several, for instance, replace “brain” with “minds,” which in the singular is perhaps more in line with the notions of “the general mind” circulating in the mid nineteenth century, which I discuss below. This quotation has often been used in social memory studies to signal an increased interest in the nineteenth century with the social dimension of memory. Sociologists Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, for instance, note that for Marx, “constant attention to the past is characterized as an irrational residue of earlier social forms,” and they briefly excerpt from this passage from Marx. See Olick and Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105–40, 107. On the use of the term “residue,” see below.

historical novel assists in the development of its reader's awareness about how the past is both malleable and usable.¹¹

Social memory often refers to the traditions, narratives, rituals, and commemorative efforts passed down from generation to generation in a community that comes together based on certain identifiable kinship or kindred associations—family, nationality, race, religion, political affiliation, and so on—but it also refers to other modes of transmission held in common by contemporary members of communities who coalesce around less conventional bonds or markers such as trauma survivorship and witnessing, affective identification, persecution and resistance, and so on. By applying the terms and theories of social memory studies to nineteenth-century British literary production, my work rethinks prominent historiographical traditions in the nineteenth century by analyzing the genre as it takes up major moments of crisis and contact for aesthetic and cultural purposes. My concentration on social memory as constructed out of these encounters creates an opportunity for understanding how diverse populations may develop alternative visions of their past centered in shared memorial experiences. This, in turn, opens up far-reaching perspectives on history that incorporate frequently convergent yet underrepresented categories of analysis in the historical novel such as gender, class, and race.

¹¹ The term “usable past” has become a commonplace in social memory studies. Most critics point to its early use by American literary critic Van Wyck Brooks in his essay on canon formation after World War I. See his “On Inventing a Usable Past,” *The Dial* 64 (11 April 1918): 337–41.

While recent and important contributions to the study of the genre look at the role of gender and nationality, for instance, few of these studies have offered an affective approach to the nineteenth-century historical novel despite increased attention paid both to “the sociology of emotions,” the interdisciplinary research into the dynamic interplay of emotions in social life, and the field of social memory studies over the last several decades.¹² “Social Memory and Nineteenth-Century British Historical Fiction” seeks to correct this oversight by examining a history of the genre through the lens of social memory. Specifically, I argue that social memory was being investigated and formulated as a transdisciplinary concept in the nineteenth century and that authors of nineteenth-century historical novels were actively taking part in that process.

My dissertation is guided by the following claims:

- Historical fiction often approaches the ways in which social memory is key to group identity by foregrounding instances of loss, ultimately proceeding from the place of crisis that signals rupture, breakage, even perhaps *aporia*, and, later in the nineteenth century, trauma.
- Historical fiction demonstrates how loss is crucial to the development of social memory and delineates the political and cultural manipulation of social memory, which is capable of challenging, often violently, kinship bonds at the personal, local, and national levels.

¹² On “the sociology of emotions,” see Jonathan E. Turner and Jan E. Stets, *The Sociology of Emotions* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005); and Peggy A. Thoits, “The Sociology of Emotions,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 15 (August 1989): 317–42.

- The nineteenth-century British historical novels examined here investigate the ways in which social memory constructs social group identities and how this often occurs through resistance to dominant ideologies and authorities based upon a shared sense of the past that diverges from or challenges prevailing, authorized beliefs and narratives.
- The nineteenth-century British historical novel represents the role of individual and collective memory as integral both to the process of democratizing the past and its archives—that is, making them more accessible to a larger number of people of varying social classes, gender, and other identificatory categories—as well as to making the past and narratives about it relevant to the present.
- The historical novel of this period participates in an educative project that treats social memory as key to exploring, envisioning, and making sense of the past for the purposes of contemporary group formation and community identity.

Social Memory Studies

In 1998, in an effort to provide a disciplinary framework for social memory studies, sociologists Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins charted a history of scholarship that looked at memory as a dynamic interplay between the individual and the community, between the past and the present, and how memory shapes identity through its appeal to a shared sense of the past and those stories told about it.¹³ Olick and Robbins, along with other contemporary theorists of social memory, frequently trace the discipline's starting

¹³ Olick and Robbins, pp. 105–40.

point to the work on collective memory by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945) in the 1920s.¹⁴ His *On Collective Memory* outlines parameters, what he called “the social frameworks of memory”—a phrase that has since become conventional in social memory studies—for understanding how memory is constructed by social forces as well as individual recollection. As he writes, “One cannot in fact think about the events of one’s past without discoursing upon them. But to discourse upon something means to connect within a single system of ideas our opinions as well as those of our circle. It means to perceive in what happens to us a particular application of facts concerning which social thought reminds us at every moment of the meaning and impact those facts have for it. In this way, the framework of collective memory confirms and binds our most intimate remembrances to each other.”¹⁵ Key to Halbwachs’s theory of memory is his notion of “autobiographical memory” and “historical memory.” For the sociologist, autobiographical memory is the lived experience of the individual, which can be variously recalled and activated when present circumstances require; historical memory is that which is collectively held significant—documents, objects, artifacts, and so on—that reflect not only previously lived experiences of older members of the group who may have passed on but also what may be useful for the historical continuity of the group. Thus, for example, ceremonies and commemorative celebrations are integral to collective memory because of their ability to communicate meaning to contemporary and

¹⁴ Olick and Robbins, p. 106.

¹⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 53.

future groups. These events, which remind members of the group of defining moments in their shared identity, are also key to studies of social memory because they express how the groups speak about their past and envision their future.

For Halbwachs, memory was not simply a matter of distant impressions stored in an individual's mind. It was constructed and acted upon by social forces, but it was also flexible enough to meet the present needs of the individual. While this has been one of the defining characteristics in subsequent theoretical accounts of memory and the processes by which it becomes a social imperative, critics, working to refine Halbwachs's early figuration of collective memory, explore the negotiations between the individual and the group, the personal and the public, in a manner that takes into account the complexities of modernity. What collective, and the complementary terms cultural and social, memory offer, according to these writers on the subject, is the "[maintenance] of social cohesion and identity."¹⁶ Thus memory is in the service of the present every bit as much as it works to preserve the past, and that service is often consolatory, even therapeutic in nature. (Although, as I noted before, social memory can be imposing.)

Anne Whitehead, in her history of memory studies, defines "collective memory" as "a memory or set of memories that [is] shared, passed on, and constructed by the group, as opposed to an individual subject."¹⁷ Barbara A. Misztal allows that the terms collective and social memory are, for the most part, interchangeable and can be explained

¹⁶ Anne Whitehead, *Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 152.

¹⁷ Whitehead, p. 158.

as “a group’s representation of its past, both the past that is commonly shared and the past that is collectively commemorated, that enacts and gives substance to that group’s identity, its present condition and its vision of the future.”¹⁸ And Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell, editors of a recent collection of essays exploring the relationship between social memory and history from an anthropological perspective, argue that “Even if we cannot say exactly what [social memory] is, we seem to recognize it when we see it.”¹⁹ My work is influenced by their articulation of social memory.

Collective or social memories are shaped by social, economic, and political circumstances; by beliefs and values; by opposition and resistance. They involve cultural norms and issues of authenticity, identity, and power. They are implicated in ideologies. Social memories are associated with or belong to particular categories or groups so they can be, and often are, the focus of conflict and contestation. They can be discussed and negotiated, accepted or rejected. Collective memories are expressed in a variety of ways. They create interpretive frameworks that help make experience comprehensible. They are marked by a dialectic between stability or historical continuity and innovations or changes.²⁰

¹⁸ Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, Theorizing Society Series, ser. ed. Larry Ray (Maidenhead, Berkshire UK and Philadelphia PA: Open Univ. Press, 2003), p. 158.

¹⁹ Maria G. Cattell and Jacob J. Climo, “Introduction: Meaning in Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives,” in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives* (Walnut Creek CA, Lanham MD, New York, and Oxford: Altamira Press, 2002), pp. 1–36, 4.

²⁰ Ibid.

This is a modern iteration of a phenomenon that I argue has a much earlier lineage than has previously been examined.

Indeed, Byron's use of the phrase "social memory" in *Marino Faliero* reveals an awareness of this phenomenon at work in society in the early decades of the nineteenth century that would then flourish in subsequent decades. Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803–73), Marx, Margaret Oliphant (1828–97), and George Eliot (1819–80), for instance, all took up the varieties of social memory in their explanations of "historical memory" and "national memory" as the generational passing on of a communal identity worth commemorating, or in Marx's case as previously quoted, sometimes worth resisting.²¹ According to David W. Blight, Frederick Douglass (1818–95) recognized the political massaging of memories about the U. S. Civil War and argued for the sustained remembrance of what he considered the war's most important outcome—emancipation. Douglass identified what he called "common memory," a political commitment to

²¹ It should be noted that "historical memory" also can and often did refer to the memory of a distant past that was recognized as having historical significance and that could have contemporary social relevance even if this was not always acknowledged by contemporary groups. But when George Eliot uses the term in *Romola*, for instance, she suggests that memory has a place both in the social dimension of a historical period as well as in social settings in the contemporary *milieu*. In so doing, she anticipates Barry Schwartz's argument that the past is palimpsestic in nature: "we find the past to be neither totally precarious nor immutable, but a stable image upon which new elements are intermittently superimposed," he writes. See his "Social Change and Collective Memory: The Democratization of George Washington," *American Sociological Review* 56.2 (April 1991): 221–36, 234. Schwartz argues against David Lowenthal's notion that the past was often dislocated from its inheritors, when he declares that "The past, then, is a familiar rather than a foreign country; its people different, but not strangers to the present" (p. 234). For Lowenthal, see *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (1985; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002).

remembering emancipation as a defining moment not only in African American history more specifically but also in U. S. history more broadly.²²

It is possible to see the formulation of a theory of social memory in discussions about what men and women in the nineteenth century termed “the general mind.” Conservative, Scottish historian Archibald Alison (1792–1867), in writing about the power of the dramatic imagination to influence an audience argued that “The experience of all ages has taught, that the drama is never successful unless it appeals to feelings which find a responsive echo in the general mind, and awakens associations of general interest in the breast of the audience.”²³ George Henry Lewes (1817–78), in a delineation of his theory of the “general mind,” referred to the dynamic relationship among the individual, the group, and the past.

The experiences of each individual come and go; they correct, enlarge, destroy one another, leaving behind them a residual store, which, condensed in intuitions and formulated in principles, direct and modify all future experiences. The sum of these is designated as the individual mind. A similar process evolves the general mind—the residual store of experiences common to all. By means of language the individual shares in the general fund, which thus becomes for him an

²² On Frederick Douglass and his efforts to foreground the Civil War in the social memory of African Americans and the United States at large, see David W. Blight, “‘For Something beyond the Battlefield’: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War,” in *Memory and American History*, ed. David Thelen (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 27–49.

²³ Archibald Alison, “The Historical Romance,” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 58 (359) (September 1845): 341–56, 349.

impersonal objective influence. To it each appeals. We all assimilate some of its material, and help to increase its store. Not only do we find ourselves confronting nature, to whose order we must conform, but confronting society, whose laws we must obey. We have to learn what nature is and does, what our fellow-men think and will, and unless we learn aright and act in conformity, we are inexorably punished.²⁴

He further explains that “Each new generation is born in this social medium, and has to adapt itself to the established forms.”²⁵

The terms “residual store” and “social medium” resonate with modern social memory studies. “Residue” is used frequently without annotation in texts that explore the development of social memory in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. For the nineteenth century, residue may very well have functioned as a term that illustrated the frequent analogy of society to a biological organism following Charles Darwin’s (1809–82) publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and made explicit by Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) in his use of the phrase “the social organism.” Indeed, in his *Memory: An Inductive Study*, Frederick Welton Colegrove wrote, “After an analogy to the Darwinian biology, the laws of memory may be termed laws of intellectual selection. The mechanism which renders possible a survival of images is: (1) a memory persisting

²⁴ George Henry Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind. Third Series: Problem the First: The Study of Psychology, Its Object, Scope, and Method* (London: Trübner, 1879), pp. 161–62.

²⁵ Lewes, p. 166.

in the brain; (2) a trace or residuum persisting in the brain; (3) a disposition persisting in the brain.”²⁶ For modern-day theorists of social memory, the use of the term residue to denote a kind of seepage of the past into the present augments the by-now conventional use of “trace” to talk about the specter of the past in the present. The terms “residue” and “trace” have incorporated the economic and political as well. In his reading of Marxist cultural analysis, for example, Raymond Williams argues that the notion of a “residual culture” is important for understanding the grip the past may have on the present. As he writes,

By “residual” I mean that some experiences, meanings and values which cannot be verified or cannot be expressed in the terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practised on the basis of the residue—cultural as well as social—of some previous social formation. There is a real case of this in certain religious values, by contrast with the very evident incorporation of most religious meanings and values into the dominant system. The same is true, in a culture like Britain, of certain notions derived from a rural past, which have significant popularity. A residual culture is usually at some distance from the effective dominant culture, but one has to recognize that, in real cultural activities, it may get incorporated into it. This is because some part of it, some version of it—and especially if the residue is from some major area of the past—will in many cases

²⁶ Frederick Welton Colegrove, *Memory: An Inductive Study* (New York: Henry Holt, 1900), p. 32.

have had to be incorporated if the effective dominant culture is to make sense in those areas. It is also because at certain points a dominant culture cannot allow too much of this kind of practice and experience outside itself, at least without risk. Thus the pressures are real, but certain genuinely residual meanings and practices in some important cases survive.²⁷

The twentieth-century critic here, in many ways, echoes the efforts many nineteenth-century men and women made to identify residual social formations present in their society. They frequently attempted to categorize elements of those formations as social memory and situate social memory in the interdisciplinary production of knowledge.

Lewes, in the above passage, also anticipates the theory of collective consciousness later expounded by French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), a close mentor to Halbwachs, when he notes that the “direction impressed by the General Mind on the feelings and opinions of particular minds” is a notion already in circulation or, as he says, “This influence is implied in the familiar use of such terms as the Mind, Common Sense, Collective Consciousness, Thought (*Das Denken*), Reason, Spirit of the Age, &c.”²⁸ Various conceptualizations of the social dimension to memory emerge out of the fluidity of the disciplinary formulations of psychology, sociology, physiology,

²⁷ Raymond Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory” (1973), in *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*, eds. Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1991), pp. 407–23, 415–16.

²⁸ Lewes, p. 159. On Halbwachs’s relationship with Durkheim, see Lewis A. Coser, “Introduction” to *On Collective Memory*, pp. 1–34.

ethnography, and so on that were being made in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Literature contributes to these formulations.

In 1896, American sociologist and political scientist Franklin Henry Giddings (1855–1931) used the term social memory in his *Principles of Sociology*, a text that argued that sociology should be an independent discipline. He explained that social memory was “that sum of transmitted knowledge and beliefs which is known as tradition”: “In tradition, the relations, the ideas, and the usages that have sprung up unconsciously and because of their intrinsic usefulness have survived, are consciously defined and memorized. The garnered experience of the past has become the common possession of all individuals. Tradition is thus the integration of the public opinion of many generations.”²⁹ Tradition or “traditional belief,” and by extension social memory was also fluid: “Traditional belief is ever being modified by new thought; there is an integration of tradition with current opinion. The results are variously known as standards, codes, policies, ideals, tastes, faiths, creeds, and ‘isms.’”³⁰ Although his work was often criticized for relying too much on the analogy of society as a psychic entity, it was generally acknowledged that his explanation of social memory was compelling on both sides of the Atlantic.³¹ And while not referring to this text in their important contribution to social memory studies, the essays collected in Eric Hobsbawm’s and

²⁹ Franklin Henry Giddings, *Principles of Sociology: An Analysis of the Phenomenon of Association and of Social Organization* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1896), pp. 140–41.

³⁰ Giddings, p. 145.

³¹ For an early critique of Giddings and other sociologists who argued that society could be understood in psychological terms, see Romanzo Adams, *The Nature of the Social Unity: An Examination of the Theory that Society Is a Psychic Unity* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1904).

Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (first published in 1983 and now beyond eleven printings) illustrate Giddings's argument when they locate and describe "invented tradition." Invented tradition, Hobsbawm and Ranger argue, "is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past."³² Tradition, broadly conceived as in Giddings, is one method by which the past and its value are transmitted from one generation to the next. American sociologist George Edgar Vincent (1864–1941) would go on to show how more of these methods both function to produce and to shape social memory and work to maintain continuity between the past and present.

Vincent offers a way to think about the importance of social memory that effectively bridges the nineteenth-century cultural representations of this concept with more recent theoretical assertions about it. Curiously, his work and that of Giddings and the earlier gestures by Lewes are overlooked in most genealogies of social memory studies despite the fact that they address many of the key concerns in the field. In a 1904 address to the New York Library Association, for instance, Vincent highlights the dynamic relationship between the past and the present, the individual experience and the social group, and puts forward a claim regarding how social memory is developed by

³² Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition* (1983; Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), pp. 1–14, 1.

various cultural institutions that gained increased social significance in the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, at the time of his address.

To the individual the present has no meaning, save as past experience enables him to interpret it. In a true sense personality is memory. Equally true is it that a social group maintains its integrity only under the unifying influence of a common tradition communicated from generation to generation. The family is unified not by economic interdependence, but by a living common life with common memories and a group loyalty. The fraternity perpetuates itself by initiation, ritual and instruction in tradition. The church preserves its continuity in so far as its history, its saints, its authority and ideals are vividly impressed upon each member. The nation fosters patriotism by exalting heroes, execrating traitors, celebrating victories, depreciating enemies, extolling national virtues. It builds monuments, founds universities, museums and libraries, appoints holidays and festivals, holds ceremonies, administers law, enforces customs, *i.e.*, employs endless devices for impressing the past upon the present. The social memory gives meaning and purpose to national life. In Comte's phrase, "the living are ruled by the dead."³³

³³ George Edgar Vincent, "The Library and the Social Memory," *The Library Journal* 29.11 (November 1904): 577–84, 578.

In another address, “The Social Memory” (1916), originally given to the Minnesota Historical Society, which advocates for the establishment of a Minnesota State Museum, Vincent makes explicit the analogy of social memory to individual memory and the role social memory plays in the life of a community and the history of the nation. “A state or nation,” he claims, “has a tradition, a history which may be likened to the memory of the individual. Nor is the parallel wholly fanciful. A group of people is bound together by consciousness of a common past experience. Initiation is admission to a share in this memory. By ceremonials, festivals, celebration of anniversaries a society refreshes its recollection of the past and renews its loyalty, hope, and purpose.”³⁴ The metaphor remains salient in today’s theories regarding social memory, specifically regarding how the personal and the public, the individual and the collective, the psychological and sociological uses of the past are joined together.

According to Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, “Beyond the insistent metaphorization of memory, we have been struck by the spread of talk about memory and especially by the interpenetration of individual and collective discourses: both how history borrows from psychotherapy and vice versa in their respective construals of their subjects, and how the memory of the individual—precisely that which is often taken to epitomize individuality—draws upon collective idioms and mechanisms. Today the commemorating state is likened to the remembering person, just as our idea of the

³⁴ Vincent, “The Social Memory,” *Minnesota Historical Bulletin* 1.5 (February 1916): 249–59, 249–50.

autonomy of personal memory draws upon political imagery.”³⁵ However, David Lowenthal cautions about the potential for this analogy to replace significant debate about the differences between history and memory when he writes “Individual and collective pasts have much in common, as attested by analogies frequently drawn between personal life histories and national chronicles. But the analogies should not lead us to overlook the profound differences. What we know of the past through memory is largely private and personal. What we know of the past through the study of history is mainly collective and capable of being tested against accessible sources. That is why likening these two routes to the past distresses those historians who ‘know history to be hard work while recollection seems passive, noninferential, and unverified.’”³⁶ Citing a fellow historian, Lowenthal expresses a commonplace wariness among contemporary historians when engaged with the discussion of the relationships between memory and history, the individual and the collective. Inherent in this wariness, shared by other historians such as Thomas Laqueur and Jacques Le Goff, is a regard for the policing of disciplinary boundaries often based on the reliability of evidentiary material and the authority of certain methodologies in analyzing that material.³⁷ In the nineteenth century,

³⁵ Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, eds., “Introduction: Forecasting Memory,” in *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), pp. xi–xxxviii, xiii.

³⁶ David Lowenthal, “The Timeless Past: Some Anglo-American Historical Preconceptions,” in *Memory and American History*, pp. 134–51, 134.

³⁷ See Jacques Le Goff’s *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1992); Thomas Laqueur, “We Are All Victims Now,” Review of *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood* by Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman, trans. Rachel Gomme (New Haven and London: Princeton Univ. Press, 2009), in *London Review of Books* 32.13 (8 July 2010): 19–23. Laqueur’s concerns primarily subsist in how certain studies focusing on a particular

though, the ease with which the metaphor was used suggests a more fluid view of how memory and history are intertwined in the production of knowledge regarding the past, how individuals and groups think about the past, and how fields of inquiry studying the past operated more symbiotically than perhaps contemporary disciplines allow. The construction and sharing of knowledge about the past were viewed as an imperative that crossed disciplinary boundaries.

Vincent uses the analogy of individual to social memory to acknowledge the fluidity of the boundaries that separate the study of history and memory from social and psychological perspectives: “Without memory there can be no personality; without history, no real nation or state. The loss of individual memory is an actual destruction of the self. No event in personal life has meaning until it is explained by past experience. So it is with a society; only a knowledge of its history gives a clue to its character.”³⁸ In “The Social Memory,” there are significant echoes of the writings of British historian Lord Acton (1834–1902) who believed that in order to understand how a community understands its collective history, “We must know its own idea of it.”³⁹ This includes its cultural production exploring historical consciousness.

concept such as trauma have a tendency to conflate broader lines of inquiry. By contrast, historian Patrick H. Hutton recounts his own early interest in the relationship between memory and history as an encounter with this question: “If there was a history to the changes in my own memory, I wondered, was it not analogous in some way to that of the changes in the collective memory of societies at large?” See his *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover NH and London: Univ. Press of New England, 1993), p. xi.

³⁸ Vincent, “The Social Memory,” p. 250.

³⁹ John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, First Baron Acton, “The Study of History,” in *Essays in the Study of Writing of History*, ed. J. Rufus Fears (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1986), pp. 504–52, 38.

Despite the increasing professionalization of history and its widening divide from other intellectual disciplines studying memory, which came to characterize the later nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, Lord Acton claimed there was great relevance in understanding the role of the imagination in versions of the past created by individuals and groups. He believed historians “must give a just weight to fables, not as truths, but as forces. So much truth there is in saying that a people would be in the power of the man who should have the making of its ballads.”⁴⁰ Francis Barton Gummere (1855–1919) explained that “Traditional ballads, sung in the homogenous communities of Europe, helped to create the social memory; and until this epic process worked upon lyric and dramatic material, song was evanescent.”⁴¹ And Alison called historical novels “the ballads of a civilized and enlightened age.”⁴² The connection between imagination and history and how a group remembers its past is clearly in circulation by the mid nineteenth century, and later theorists take up this connection. Vincent claims, for example, that “We can not realize ourselves as a group unless, in imagination, we can picture the onward sweep of events, the pageant of the past which has made us what we are” and “Memory can not serve the future until imagination has translated the past into new ideals and purposes.”⁴³ Imagination is crucial to creating a usable past.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Francis Barton Gummere, *The Popular Ballad*, The Types of Literature Series, ser. ed. William Alan Nelson (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1907), p. 81.

⁴² Alison, p. 347.

⁴³ Vincent, “The Social Memory,” pp. 250–51.

Vincent's essays list the places, organizations, relationships, and events that are necessary in the construction and "popularizing" of social memory that remains pertinent to the development of social memory today—the church, the nation, festivals, monuments, "the family, the school, the library, the press, public ceremonies, anniversaries, pageants, the museum."⁴⁴ To this list we can add memorials, cultural heritage sites, cemeteries, literary canons, and national archives, all of which were theoretically examined in the nineteenth century. (Today, the richly symbolic digital archive, which unites the past and present in a format that anticipates technological advances in data management represents an extension of these institutions and their democratizing possibilities.) These are just some of the "institutions of memory" that preserve and communicate the social relevance of the past to the present.⁴⁵ Vincent proclaimed almost a century ago that "without an ever-alert sense of the past and its significance, a people can not maintain its solidarity and translate the experiences of yesterday into the purposes of to-morrow."⁴⁶ Institutions of memory serve several functions that work to provide this "ever-alert sense of the past and its significance." First, they preserve articles from the past—documents, artifacts, objects, traditions, and so on. Second, memory institutions commemorate those same articles, which have been

⁴⁴ Vincent, "The Social Memory," p. 254.

⁴⁵ The terms memory institutions or institutions of memory have become commonplace in social memory studies. See the collection *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, eds. Francis Xavier Blouin, Jr., and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor MI: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2007); and R. Hjerpe, "A Framework for the Description of Generalized Documents," *Advances in Knowledge Organization* 4 (1994): 173–80.

⁴⁶ Vincent, "The Social Memory," p. 259.

valued by the individuals, groups, and organizations responsible for their safe-keeping by the very fact that they were indeed kept.⁴⁷ Third, they ensure the generational transmission and contemporary sharing of these items, which, in turn, helps to shape a version of the past that draws individuals together in both conventional and unconventional ways. And, fourth, they highlight the narrative impulse that accompanies the work of memory. In other words, the past and our responses to it require a storyteller for the sake of transmission.

A brief, nineteenth-century example will help to illustrate these points, which the remainder of the dissertation aims further to explain. In 1844, almost a full half-century after his death, a festival was held to commemorate the Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759–96). Hailed as a “National Gathering” and “National Festival,” the 6 August assembly included many important historical figures of the day as well as of those less famous men and women who counted “the Poet of the Poor” among their ranks. Accounts of the celebration were recorded in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine*, and by the editor of the *Dumfries-shire Herald*, Thomas Aird (1802–76), among others. Typical to the records of such festivals are the lists of attendees and a recounting of their speeches, or, in this case, their toasts to the memory not only of Burns but also of Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), James Hogg (1770–1835),

⁴⁷ A quick point should be made about the destruction of items from the past. On the one hand, an item may be destroyed simply because it is deemed not worth keeping; on the other hand, destroying something assures that what is remembered has been manipulated.

known in the toasts as the Ettrick Shepherd, and Allan Cunningham (1784–1842), to name a few of the worthies.

Also typical to these accounts and more important for this project is the language used to describe the purpose of such a festival. The Scottish writer John Wilson (1785–1854) explained that “Were this Festival but to commemorate the genius of Burns, and it were asked, what need now for such commemoration, since his fame is coextensive with the literature of the land, and enshrined in every household? I might answer, that although admiration of the poet be as wide as the world, yet we, his compatriots, to whom he is especially dear, rejoice to see the universal sentiment concentrated in one great assemblage of his own people: that we meet in thousands to honour him, who delights each single one of us at his own hearth. But this commemoration expresses, too, if not a profounder, a more tender sentiment; for it is to welcome his sons to the land he has illustrated, so that we may at once indulge our national pride in a great name, and gratify in filial hearts the most pious of affections.”⁴⁸ The two-fold purpose of celebrating a national figure and welcoming home his children after a lapse of nearly fifty years seeks to establish several communal bonds along generational, domestic, patriotic, aesthetic, and perhaps even ecological lines as the repeated references to the influence of

⁴⁸ W. E. Aytoun, William Mure, Archibald Alison, John Wilson, Henry Glassford Bell, et al., “The Burns Festival,” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 56 (347) (September 1844): 370–98, 378. There is some debate over the authorship of this account. The Wellesley Index identifies those listed above as contributors, but an 1885 bibliography of Burns composed by James Gibson argues that the article was originally written by Aird for the *Dumfries-shire Herald* and then reprinted in *Blackwood's*. Alex Tyrrell lists Aytoun as the author. See his “Paternalism, Public Memory, and National Identity in Early Victorian Scotland: The Robert Burns Festival at Ayr in 1844,” *History* 90.297 (January 2005): 42–61. The third-person reference to and inclusion of Aird's closing remarks from the *Dumfries-shire Herald* make the authorship of this article even more ambiguous, in a source that deeply confounds attempts at evidentiary authentication.

“The Land of Burns” on the poet, his works, and his audience imply. As Wilson goes on to declare, they are gathered together by “the enthusiastic desire of a whole people to pay honour to their greatest countryman. It is the spontaneous outpouring of a nation’s feeling towards the illustrious dead, and the wish to extend the hand of welcome and of friendship to those whom he has left behind. Here on the very spot where the Poet first drew breath, on the very ground which his genius has hallowed, the monument which an admiring and repentant people have raised to his memory, we meet after the lapse of years, to pay our homage at the shrine of genius.”⁴⁹ Older members of the gathering, specifically the “Farmers and Shepherds” who perceived deep connections between them and Burns we are told, are drawn to the poet’s remaining family members “and looked with wistful eyes . . . if haply they might trace in their lineaments some resemblance to the features of him whom, from their infancy, they had learned to love.”⁵⁰ This is a literal application of one frequent aim of social memory—to trace the past, or identify its residue, in the present. The desire to reanimate the past or its accompanying lessons and symbols, in other words, is central to the practices of social memory. The confounding of individual desires with collective goals characterizes these practices and speaks more broadly to what Halbwachs identified as the “social frameworks of memory.” In this instance, the domestic and the national frameworks for understanding the past are conjoined to communicate the social value of a public voice worth remembering.

⁴⁹ Aytoun, et al., p. 377.

⁵⁰ Aytoun, et al., p. 375.

What is also important here, though, is the way in which the various toasts commemorating Burns and other popular poets and writers are bookended by explicitly political debates. At the opening of the account in *Blackwood's*, for instance, readers are told that the festival comes at a time when Scotland had “been exposed to perilous influences” and “threw itself headlong into the revolutionary current which swept the whole empire at the period of Parliamentary Reform” in the 1830s. But the national festival symbolized one moment when order was restored as the various social classes were drawn together in appreciation for a beloved native son. The contributors to this account of the event claim that “Even when the storm was wildest, and the clash of conflicting opinions most discordant, it was impossible to eradicate from the minds of any order the vast and stirring memories of the past.”⁵¹ The festival, it is implied, was capable of quelling social unrest—at least temporarily and at least in the minds of many conservative members of the middle and upper classes.

Indeed, the festival is richly representative of how shared memories can be manipulated for political purposes. Despite the assertion that the commemoration represented a “spontaneous outpouring of a nation’s feeling” or the observation that “It seemed as if all classes had spontaneously assembled to join hands above the grave of Robert Burns, and then and there to renew the vow of enduring reconciliation and love,” this was a highly organized event. An elaborate pavilion was set up for the banquet, the Earl of Eglinton (1812–61), who was responsible for putting on the lavish medieval

⁵¹ Aytoun, et al., p. 370.

reenactment known as the Eglinton Tournament of 1839, presided over the proceedings, and foreign visitors arrived from as far away as the United States.⁵² There was some sense that the celebration itself had been disturbingly late in coming. Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), for instance, in a letter explaining that he would be unable to attend the festival, wrote to William Bone and John Gray, “It would have given me real pleasure to assist in any Public Testimony, as rational and earnest as our times permit, of the reverence entertained by Scotland towards this the most gifted of all her sons for some generations past; one whom she has good cause to look upon with gratitude, with pride,—and, alas, also with various other feelings, wherein sorrow, self-reproach, and determination to treat her next gifted one a little more wisely, should not be wanting!”⁵³ And Douglas Jerrold (1803–57), writing for *Punch*, boldly proclaimed, “To-day Scotland did penance for past coldness of heart, and avarice of pocket” in honoring the poet.⁵⁴

It is hard not to see this as a calculated effort to appease the working classes who, it was perceived, identified with Burns. As Alex Tyrrell notes, the delay in commemorating Burns more than likely represented the amount of time it took for conservatives such as Wilson and Eglinton to appropriate, to use Tyrrell’s term, the memory of the radical Burns in order to put him into the service of an “invented Scottishness” that celebrated a stable, aristocratic social order built on traditional

⁵² Aytoun, et al., p. 371.

⁵³ Thomas Carlyle to William Bone and John Gray, 6 July 1844, available online at The Carlyle Letters Online. 29 November 2010 <<http://carlyleletters.dukejournals.org/cgi/content/full/18/1/lt-18440706-TC-WBAJG-01>>.

⁵⁴ Douglas Jerrold, “The Burns Festival, Repentant Scotland,” *Punch* 7 (17 August 1844): 81–2, 81.

agrarianism and that was activated to counter the fervor for reform in the 1830s.⁵⁵

According to Tyrrell, the reviews of the event were mixed with many attendees noting an out-of-place Tory tenor, so much so that Wilson could not complete his toast. Wilson asked that it be reprinted in the *Blackwood's* account, and it was.⁵⁶ This is an extraordinary instance of historical tampering. The periodical print record, often relied upon by historians, in this case is not accurate, and if not for the personal accounts of the event and the actors involved recorded in later memoirs, the inaccuracy would stand as historical fact. Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang argue that “the surviving residue of records always gives a less than perfect account of past activity. Not everything is preserved.”⁵⁷ But this is something worse, namely, that which is preserved is false. The evidentiary record is corrupt, or as Carlyle observed in his 1833 essay “On History Again,” “Our Letter of Instruction,” that is, history, “comes to us in the saddest state: falsified, blotted out, torn, lost, and but a shred of it in existence; this too so difficult to read, or spell.”⁵⁸ In this instance, the historical record is held accountable by memory.

⁵⁵ Tyrrell, p. 59. In their essay on forgotten etchers, Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang argue that “those whose art can be made to serve a broader cause, such as defining an emerging identity or dramatizing new aspirations, are more likely to be granted a prominent place in the collective memory.” See their “Recognition and Renown: The Survival of Artistic Reputation,” *American Journal of Sociology* 94.1 (July 1988): 79–109, 100. In the example of Burns, the political appropriation of the poet serves in a decidedly different way than the poet might have desired.

⁵⁶ Tyrrell, p. 57.

⁵⁷ Lang and Lang, p. 101.

⁵⁸ Carlyle, “On History Again” (1833), in *Historical Essays* by Carlyle, ed. Chris R. Vanden Bossche (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2002), pp. 15–22, 16. Ann Rigney also quotes this passage in her article on Carlyle’s fascination with “the boundlessness of the past, its inaccessibility, and its unintelligibility.” See her “The Untenanted Places of the Past: Thomas Carlyle and the Varieties of

The festival and the accounts of it reveal not only the desire but also the effort to control the memories of the past, to shape them into a manageable body of influence in the present. As P. A. Shackel has noted, and Tyrrell recites, “Those who control the past have the ability to command social and political events in the present and the future.”⁵⁹ This control is most often represented in narrative form. My aim in this project is to look at one narrative form in particular—the nineteenth-century British historical novel—in order to show its role in adapting the past for present purposes. This is one avenue that Patrick H. Hutton sees available to the postmodern scholar interested in what he terms the “memory/history problem.” Today’s scholars “may not be able to bring alive the thoughts of the actors of history, as the [nineteenth-century] historicists proposed they could. But they can write histories of the changing ways in which the past has been portrayed in commemorative forms over time.”⁶⁰ My dissertation advances the claim that the historical novel is one such commemorative form, “a mode of social remembrance,” that allows today’s scholars access into the nature of affective and historical consciousness in the nineteenth century.⁶¹

Historical Ignorance,” *History and Theory* 35.3 (October 1996): 338–57, 342. For her use of the Carlyle passage, see p. 346. Here she also includes the earlier description by Carlyle of history as “the Letter of Instructions, which the old generations write and posthumously transmit to the new.” (This is found on p. 15 of Carlyle’s essay in the above cited source.)

⁵⁹ P. A. Schackel, *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape* (Gainesville FL: Univ. of Florida Press, 2001), p. 3. Also qtd. in Tyrrell, p. 52.

⁶⁰ Hutton, p. xxiv.

⁶¹ On modes of social remembrance, see the essays in the special issue of *European Journal of English Studies*, “Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory,” edited by Astrid Erll and Rigney, 10.2 (August 2006). The editors identify the historical novel as one such mode. See, for instance, Erll in the following section.

Social Memory and Narratives about the Past

Writers studying social memory are sensitive to the deeply entwined relationships among memory and history, space and time, and often highlight the role of modernity and its accompanying anxiety in the development of social memory, particularly at the turn of the nineteenth century. Peter Fritzsche identifies the years following the upheaval of the French Revolution as a significant moment in which “revolution, war, and industrialization profoundly shaped the way the West thought and still thinks about time and history.”⁶² “As past and present floated free from each other,” he argues, “contemporaries reimagined their relations with the past in increasingly flamboyant ways. The past was conceived more and more as something bygone and lost, and also strange and mysterious, and although partially accessible, always remote. The disconnection from the past was a source of melancholy . . . but it also prompted a search for new ways to understand difference.”⁶³ The booming popularity of the historical novel in nineteenth-century Britain suggests just one way in which authors and readers were attempting “to understand difference” as well as this new place of the past in the present. As the past became increasingly threatened by modern advances—railroad expansion, industrialization, the shift from rural to urban market economies, growing spiritual uncertainty brought on by scientific discovery, and so on—the desire to preserve it

⁶² Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard Univ. Press, 2004), p. 5.

⁶³ Fritzsche, p. 5.

became increasingly pronounced. Integral to this desire was a view of the past marked by loss brought on by the violence of progress in the modern world. In this view, the memorial project, its politicization, and even its manipulation became potential registers of historical viability.

My dissertation examines the genre of historical fiction as it emerges out of the following interrelated cultural developments in the nineteenth century: an increased focus on the historical significance of the emotional and private lives of individuals; the challenges to empirical methodologies as dominant disciplinary practices; a flourishing of nineteenth-century theories about memory and its influence on social relationships; and the communal and national popularity of preservation and restoration as ways to cope with the loss of a British past signaled by the destruction of the material, physical, and even spiritual worlds carried out in the name of progress during the nineteenth century.

Many works of modern literary criticism of nineteenth-century British literature and culture have taken a decidedly affective turn in recent years. Works by Jill L. Matus, Christopher Herbert, and Roger Luckhurst, for instance, have analyzed how early instantiations of an interdisciplinary concept such as trauma offer a foundation for a richer contemporary study of the concept. My dissertation similarly seeks to provide a lineage for contemporary social and cultural memory studies by showing how the texts examined herein take up what have become familiar issues and arguments in this field of inquiry. It is my belief, in other words, that the genre of the historical novel offers a rich quarry of early instances of social memory at work.

The dissertation argues that a literary study of social memory in nineteenth-century British historical fiction offers rewarding possibilities for expanding contemporary knowledge of the nineteenth-century British contribution to the genre of the historical novel more specifically and nineteenth-century British literature and culture more broadly. It also affords today's readers an understanding of how nineteenth-century men and women may have viewed the presence of the past in their day-to-day individual and collective lives. A literary study of social memory asserts that nineteenth-century cultural production is a valuable contribution both to the history of memory as it relates to the human condition and to the development of memory studies as a vital, interdisciplinary field of inquiry.

The historical novel, a genre already beset by and contingent upon loss—of past identities, communities, selves, and so on—makes central the role of social memory in the development of affective kinships in community-building in the nineteenth century. To be sure, other novelistic genres treat loss and affective communities. Condition-of-England novels, for instance, are deeply concerned with these issues. But the historical novel is particularly important for understanding this development in the nineteenth century because of its *predication* on loss; its entanglement with the memorial project; its rethinking of the place of nostalgia in a lexicon that stressed the terms of “improvement,” “progress,” and after Darwin's publication, “evolution”; and its acknowledgement of the

vulnerability of humanity in the face of history.⁶⁴ As Astrid Erll explains, “What the past appears to be in a given culture of memory—lived experience, myth, contested terrain, source of certain habits and stereotypes, or even a collective fiction—arises not so much from the remembered events themselves, but from the specific *mode* of re-presenting these events.”⁶⁵ Writers of nineteenth-century British historical novels acknowledged that exploring loss, a fundamental aspect of history, the affective responses to it, and the process by which memory becomes socially imperative could in fact lead to historical significance for the individual: everyday men and women could participate in the processes of history-making through collective remembrance.

Men and women in the nineteenth century viewed social memory as an intervention in a developmental and ultimately democratizing process. Talcott Williams (1849–1928), for instance, draws together the individual, the community, memory, and duty in his address at the dedication of the library at the University of Pennsylvania in 1891: “In our individual experience we have each of us had our private and personal quarrel with consciousness and memory for setting in too clear a light the sins and duties, the lacks and demands of the past and passing day. The revelation is no pleasanter when consciousness, memory, and responsibility are social and national. Yet it is only by accepting both a complete social consciousness and a complete social memory that a

⁶⁴ Williams notes the close connection between “evolution” and “revolution” beginning in the mid-nineteenth century in his *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, rev. edn. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), pp. 270–74, 273.

⁶⁵ Erll, “Re-Writing as Re-Visioning: Modes of Representing the ‘Indian Mutiny’ in British Novels, 1857 to 2000,” in *EJES*, “Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory,” pp. 163–85, 179.

society can be created whose ultimate end is the highest development of each of its individuals, whose service is the highest duty of all its members.”⁶⁶ Albion Woodbury Small (1854–1926) two decades later, in a series of contrasts between ancient and modern “man,” echoes this claim that social memory is necessary for a modern society and views this development as part of an evolutionary process. “Men are not constant terms in a world equation. Men are not, like the atomicities and specific gravities of chemical elements, fixed and unchanging. Men are,” rather, “evolving combinations of qualities and capacities.”

We all know this, although we have not yet put the proofs of it in such evident order that it is a very vivid truth. If necessary to illustrate we might recall the fact that the ancient man was a tool user, while the modern man is a machine user; the ancient man relied upon his individual memory, the modern man employs all sorts of records, or, as they have been called, the social memory; the ancient man was relatively unfit to co-operate with his fellows, the modern man is relatively adjustable to cooperation with his fellows; the ancient man was relatively unsympathetic, the modern man is relatively sympathetic.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Talcott Williams, “Address at the Dedication of the Library of the University of Pennsylvania,” *The Library Journal* 16 (April 1891): 108–12, 111.

⁶⁷ Albion Woodbury Small, *The Meaning of Social Science* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1910), pp. 144–45. Small was, significantly, the scholar who established the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago in the early 1890s—the first such department in the United States—where both Vincent and Halbwachs were one-time faculty members in the early 1900s. Small’s book, like Giddings’s text, was part of an effort to outline the field of sociology that was influential on both sides of the Atlantic.

Social memory, cooperation, sympathy—these are concepts representative of modern society, according to Small. They are also key concepts in the historical novels of this period.

The introduction of social memory in historical narratives unexpectedly works to create an emotional identification in the reader that compensates for the chronological (and sometimes geographical) distance of the past, which can have a democratizing affect on the audience. This is characteristic of social memory's ability to draw together disparate groups for common purposes and collective goals. The aggregation of social memory often occurs simultaneously with the coalescing of social groups. In other words, social memory is viewed as integral to the process of group formation because it allows the group to understand the moments of shared experience, sometimes shared traumas that, in turn, lend the group meaning and may even lead it to resist or contest other groups, particularly those groups in power. This final point is particularly important for contemporary readers of memory and trauma studies in understanding the relationship between memory and modernity and what some have called "the crisis of memory," but it is equally salient for studying nineteenth-century historical novels, which were written during what some critics have noted was a period of widening divide between those who advocated for a historical, in their terms "scientific," orientation to

the past bolstered by the authority of the archive and those who studied how individuals forged usable, if also sometimes able-to-be-manipulated, versions of the past.⁶⁸

By 1900, it would become apparent that the major writers of nineteenth-century British literature were unofficially required to try their hand at writing a historical novel. Bulwer-Lytton, Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81), William Thackeray (1811–63), Charles Reade (1814–84), Charles Kingsley (1819–75), Wilkie Collins (1824–89), Oliphant, John Henry Newman (1801–90), George Eliot, Walter Pater (1839–94), H. Rider Haggard (1856–1925), Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–94), Walter Besant (1836–1901), George Meredith (1828–1909), Joseph Conrad (1857–1924), Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930), Anthony Trollope (1815–82), Charles Dickens (1812–70), Elizabeth Gaskell (1810–65), and Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) all were responsible for producing at least one of these works. Indeed, many of the Victorian authors who were enormously popular during their lifetime but are rarely read today—Bulwer-Lytton, William Harrison Ainsworth (1805–82), G. P. R. James (1799–1860), Reade, and Kingsley, for instance—achieved critical success for their efforts in historical fiction. John Bowen notes that “No form of novel-writing in the period had more prestige, and of none were hopes higher—hopes of dignity, seriousness, and moral insight” than the historical novel.⁶⁹ Yet, in a surprising

⁶⁸ See Misztal, chapt. 5, pp. 99–125; LeGoff; and Phillipa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians, and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986). On the “crisis of memory,” see Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993).

⁶⁹ John Bowen, “The Historical Novel,” in *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, eds. Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Malden MA and Oxford UK: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 244–59, 244. It has become almost conventional that when one writes about the nineteenth-century British historical novel, one must list those who attempted it. Bowen has a similar list to the one here in his essay. And, indeed, Ernest

twist of fate, or perhaps more accurately, of taste, those Victorian novelists who remain significant to readers and dominant on English department syllabi today—Thackeray, Trollope, George Eliot, Gaskell, and Hardy, to name several—often have their contributions to this genre entirely overlooked. Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* (1859) is perhaps one of the few historical novels written by one of the most important writers of the period to enjoy any serious longevity outside of Scott's *Waverley* novels. Dickens's early attempt at the historical novel, however, *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), a novel about the Gordon Riots of 1780, remains in the long shadow of his other works and virtual canonical obscurity. George Eliot's *Romola* (1862–63) has begun to enjoy renewed appreciation from scholars, but this work is often still reviewed from an evaluative perspective that declares its ultimate failure.

The uneven record of the historical novel's popularity is not a twentieth- or twenty-first century phenomenon, however. John Sutherland observes that historical fiction was "The most numerous and least honored of Victorian fictional genres."⁷⁰ Victorian literary critics often derided, sometimes within reason, the honest efforts of authors to reconstruct a past, which they felt had saliency for the present. Robert Louis Stevenson proclaimed that "the historical novel is dead," despite going on to write *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), a point not lost on turn-of-the-twentieth-century American

Bernbaum notes before his own list of famous historical novelists, "The significance of the historical novel may be summarily suggested by calling the roll of its greatest masters." See Bernbaum, "The Views of the Great Critics on the Historical Novel," *PMLA* 41.2 (June 1926): 424–41, 424.

⁷⁰ John Sutherland, *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1990), p. 297.

literary critic Brander Matthews, whose *The Historical Novel and Other Essays* (1901) was dedicated to Samuel Clemens ([Mark Twain] 1835–1910).⁷¹ Matthews's prediction that "some of Scott's stories, hailed on their publication as faithful reproductions of medieval manners, will doubtless have another interest, in time, as illustrations of what the beginning of the nineteenth century believed the Middle Ages to be" is keen.⁷² Ernest Bernbaum argued in 1926 that the decline of the historical novel paralleled the rise in empiricism. "Upon the reputation of the historical novel, Empiricism," he observes, "had a powerful and dire effect."

It presupposed that the Past was an objectively existing reality which scientific historians could copy, that faith and imagination are not rational uses of the mind, and that the positively valuable knowledge is gained by direct observation. Art and literature as means of communicating such observation are useful to society, and the best art is a copy of that objective reality in which we must struggle to survive. If the knowledge most worth gaining was that gained through the senses, obviously it was the author who dealt with his own time, with what he had personally experienced, who served a useful purpose; the others dealt in chimeras, and were at best mere entertainers. It is the gradual permeation of such ideas

⁷¹ Robert Louis Stevenson qtd. in Brander Matthews, "The Historical Novel" (1897), in *The Historical Novel and Other Essays* (1901; rpt. Detroit: Gale, 1969), pp. 3–28, 3.

⁷² Matthews, p. 14.

from philosophy into literary criticism that seems to me to account for the disfavor into which the historical novel soon fell among the intellectual.⁷³

Very often, a history of the historical novel can be divided into two modes of organization: by individual and by chronology. The former is a history of the canon's great authors' attempts at the genre, and through that lens, the historical novel will always be considered a lesser literary production because these attempts at the genre are the anomalous works of authors who excelled in other modes of writing such as social realism. The latter is, inevitably, a story of decline, in which the works of even the most popular writers of historical novels, Ainsworth, Bulwer-Lytton, and G. P. R. James figure along a continuum of increasingly negative review toward the end of the nineteenth century. (Significantly, these authors are rarely if ever included on modern university syllabi, and, within the canon itself, they have been relegated to the status of minor novelists.) Both modes provoke an evaluation of the genre as inferior to other, contemporary genres. I hope to challenge this by focusing on historical novels centered in the construction of social memory and affective awakenings that are prompted by specific events that put pressure on conventional communal formations.

The sheer proliferation of these period-specific, event-specific, or crisis-specific novels suggests an alternative way to examine not only the genre and its authors but also the larger cultural and critical debates precipitated by these events and in the recounting

⁷³ Bernbaum, p. 429.

of these events. In so doing, I follow Georg Lukács, whose own study of the genre has been called “monumental” by Frederic Jameson.⁷⁴ Lukács argued that “It was the French Revolution, the revolutionary wars and the rise and fall of Napoleon, which for the first time made history a *mass experience*, and moreover on a European scale . . . [and] if experiences such as these are linked with the knowledge that similar upheavals are taking place all over the world, this must enormously strengthen the feeling first that there is such a thing as history, that it is an uninterrupted process of changes and finally that it has a direct effect upon the life of every individual.”⁷⁵ Richard Maxwell’s more recent and compelling work also suggests that the historical novel of crisis is crucial to our understanding of this genre, and my project is indebted to their analyses.⁷⁶

Where I intervene in this conversation is by focusing on the historical novel as a mediation of social memory and affect. Andrew Sanders writes that “To the Victorian historical novelists the past was not frozen by eternity, nor was it, unlike the scenes of Keats’s Grecian Urn, rendered eternal, silent, and unravished by art. To Scott’s successors history was contemporary, synchronic and enveloping; it was living and vibrating in the present, and the artist represented its reality as if it were an act of

⁷⁴ Frederic Jameson, “Introduction,” in Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (Lincoln NE and London: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1983), pp. 1–8, 1.

⁷⁵ Lukács, p. 23.

⁷⁶ Richard Maxwell, *The Historical Novel in Europe, 1650–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), p. 94n140.

personal memory. The past reinforced rather than undermined the present.”⁷⁷ My dissertation argues that the historical novel is an act of *social* memory, a contribution to a reconceptualization of the past that is influenced by a nineteenth-century, interdisciplinary call to understanding the relationship among the individual, the community, and remembrance.

In particular, I am interested in how this new perspective allows modern readers of the nineteenth-century historical novel to understand social memory as a challenge to the conventional versions of historical consciousness prevalent during the century. In 1900, Francis Hovey Stoddard explained that the historical novel was “a record of individual life, of individual emotion, in circumstances and times of historical interest. For its making two things are requisite,—that there be a conception of, and a fondness for, the facts and spirit of history; and that there be a knowledge of, and an appreciation of, the importance of the individual life.”⁷⁸ He further claimed that “The novel is the story of an experience in human life under stress of emotion. It demands interest in man as man and in woman as woman; it demands a sense of the universality of the interest in the emotion of a single individual; it demands a conviction that if that emotion be real and intense and true, the life is a typical life, and its portrayal a matter for the concern of

⁷⁷ Andrew Sanders, *The Victorian Historical Novel, 1840–1880* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1979), p. 31.

⁷⁸ Francis Hovey Stoddard, “The Historical Novel,” in *The Evolution of the English Novel* (1900; rpt. New York: Macmillan, 1923), chapt. 3, pp. 84–119, 87.

all mankind.”⁷⁹ Stoddard argues that the events in France and America at the end of the eighteenth century; the historical achievements of eighteenth-century historians such as Edward Hyde, First Earl of Clarendon (1609–74), David Hume (1711–76), William Robertson (1721–93), Oliver Goldsmith (1730–74), and Edward Gibbon (1737–94); and the novelistic innovations of Samuel Richardson (1689–1761), Henry Fielding (1707–54), Tobias Smollett (1721–71), Laurence Sterne (1713–68), Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849), and Frances Burney (1752–1840) to name several led to the belief that the individual and the affective life were important subjects for the historical novel. The historical novel is, Stoddard asserts, “necessarily an evolved form . . . It is necessarily a modern form; for the notion of democracy, the most modern of notions, is fundamental in the novel. The novel is the epic of democracy.”⁸⁰ Writers of nineteenth-century British historical fiction were invested not only with the presentation of historical detail but also, and more importantly, with the representation of affect and social memory as integral to the processes of history-making. Sustained attention to this investment, I hope, will reinvigorate studies of nineteenth-century British contributions to this rich genre.

I have organized this project into chapters that focus on historical novels written about defining moments in history that lead authors to examine the role of crises in the development of social memory. It is my belief that previously overlooked versions of the past, which emerge from or coalesce around these reference points in the history of a community, can shed light on how individuals come together. These underappreciated

⁷⁹ Stoddard, pp. 89–90.

⁸⁰ Stoddard, p. 91.

narratives are often centered in shared ideology that allows for an analysis of history “from below.” In other words, despite the fact that these novels take place during historically significant periods or events, the social memories that are frequently recorded and celebrated are those constructed by the men and women who have often existed at the margins of history. Of course, the nineteenth-century historical novel depends upon the interaction between the famous and the anonymous, but this dissertation claims that through its representation of social memory, the historical novel also reveals a negotiation of control over remembrance between those in power and those subject to it.

In Chapter One, “Sir Walter Scott, Monuments, and the Spaces of Remembrance,” I juxtapose three forms of media that reveal how social memory manifests along cultural, literary, and even technological lines in the nineteenth century. I analyze Scott’s novel *Waverley: Or 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814), a monument erected to Scott in New York City in 1872, and the technological advancement of the stereograph, which often featured places and spaces made famous by artists, including Scott, in order to demonstrate the ways in which social memory was understood through various modes of cultural productions. This chapter does something quite different from the others in that it looks at the processes by which social memory becomes tangible, a part of the cultural landscapes both real and imagined. In other words, it looks at the material manifestation of memory before returning to the early instantiations of this process in the fictive mode of *Waverley*. Long considered to be foundational to the development of the British historical novel, *Waverley* also offers several important points

from which to begin a discussion of social memory and the historical novel in Scott's and the century's subsequent historical fiction: first, broadly conceived, social memory is an impetus to action, even to violence, in this novel; second, social memory is necessarily instructive and thus a fitting topic for the historical novel, which nineteenth-century British authors also believed to be a valuable tool for teaching and transmitting a socially significant sense of the past from one generation to another; and, third, *Waverley* details the work of social memory formation in its discussion of landscapes, ruins, relics, and records, which would lend itself to a number of mid and later nineteenth-century cultural debates such as the purposes and conflicts of restoration and preservation.

My second chapter, "Trauma, Recollection, and Victorian Literary Interpretations of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars," argues that historical novels set during the years from 1789 to 1815 evaluate the role of loss as individual and social trauma in an individual's life, a community's shared affective experience, and a nation's ideology of kinship. By focusing on texts that linger on moments of violence—impressment and the resistance to it, insurrection and its repression, for instance—I claim that the historical novel serves to reassess and often challenge national identity precisely at the moment it details the effects of communal and historical loss in the processes of both history-making and the construction of social memory. Trollope's *La Vendée* (1850), Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* (1859), and Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863) demonstrate that the historical novels written about this period are deeply concerned with psychological and sociological wounding of individual and communal identity. This chapter examines how

social memory is invoked in response to these traumatic experiences. Objects, legends, historical icons and images, for instance, are put both to consolatory and political purposes. Communities reach out and take hold of these ideas and images from the past as they seek to make whole what has been fragmented by crisis. Often this process results in the historical writer's surprising turn toward domesticity and gendered histories. I argue, for instance, that women writers of the historical novel had a vested interest in detailing the lives of their female figures as co-participants both in the creative practice of historical fiction writing as well as in the emerging discipline of historiography and cultural debates about memory.

Chapter Three, "Rupture, Risorgimento, and Archival Pilgrimage" juxtaposes two popular historical novels about a distant Italian past, Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Rienzi: Last of the Roman Tribunes* (1835) and George Eliot's *Romola* (1862–63), in order to argue that social memory is a vital component to the development of historical consciousness. This chapter looks at how novels can participate even in contemporary political movements such as the Italian Risorgimento. *Rienzi*, for instance, demonstrates that social memory emerges out of a process by which the past is intellectually considered for political repurposing. In other words, the past and its symbols are objectified and narrativized by historical actors who seek to validate their political desires by relying on a commonly held sense of purpose built upon a shared heritage or lineage. *Rienzi*, thus, takes up the issues of how memory is manipulated and imposed upon groups while simultaneously warning against the illusions that often undergird political

nostalgia. *Romola* takes this warning one step further and rewrites conventional nostalgic fiction activating notions of patriotism and reinscribes the conflicted sites of domestic and national kinship bonds. This chapter insists that Victorian historical fiction underscores the flexibility of social identities as a necessary component to the project of nation-building. These writers along with those in the previous chapter also reveal that this flexibility could become threatening to the very same project. These contestatory historical fictions challenge uncritical nostalgia often found at the heart of midcentury literary works that celebrated medievalism and the Renaissance.

Before concluding this dissertation, I review Philip Meadows Taylor's (1808–76) novel of the Indian Rebellion, *Seeta, 1857* (1872), which draws the various threads of this project—resistance, memory, history, and gender—together in its close reading of one figure marked by loss—a young, Indian widow—and the struggle for the past in the present. In so doing, I show that the formation of social memory not only represented how individuals coalesced into groups in order to resist dominant authorities but also how individuals challenged the imposition of one sense of the past upon a subordinate group. In other words, individuals often pushed back on or rejected outright the homogenizing tendencies of social memory when put in the service of powerful individuals and institutions.

At stake in such an investigation of nineteenth-century fictional representations of social memory, then, is the notion that historical novelists were involved in making explicit the politics of shaping the ways in which people remembered not only their own

pasts but also the pasts of their communities and their nation. While such an investigation may reveal benign forces at work in the construction of positive group identities, it also uncovers how traumatic instances in the lives of individuals, communities, and nations are reshaped and used for conflict, resistance, redress, and the activation of political agendas for the present and future of the nation.

CHAPTER ONE:

Sir Walter Scott, Monuments, and the Spaces of Remembrance

I read, not long ago, Vertot's *Revolutions of Sweden*, and the *Adventures of Tom Jones*: I believe the history; and I disbelieve the novel; and yet, of the novel I have a more lively remembrance than of the history.

—James Beattie, *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (1783)⁸¹

The citizens of New York have assembled to express their deep and unfeigned regret at the death of Sir Walter Scott. They feel that no eulogy of theirs can exalt the fame of him who has won the proud distinction of being compared with those who were the brightest ornaments of past ages. The writings of Sir Walter Scott have delighted and instructed almost every nation of the earth. The vigor of his mind, and the excellence of his life, have added to the intellectual and moral wealth of the world. The dwellers in his own mountain land, and they who tread our far-distant peaceful shores, may well emulate each other in offering tribute to his memory—for, his fame is a legacy to man.

—Proceedings from a Public Meeting Called to Honor the
Memory of Sir Walter Scott (1832)⁸²

While the chapters following this one will focus primarily on a collection of historical novels set in specific historical periods such as the French Revolution and the Indian Rebellion, this chapter seeks to illuminate how social memory was variously constructed and communicated in three separate mediums in the nineteenth century in order to show that a shared sense of the past was important on cultural—literary and even technological—grounds. This chapter is designed, in other words, to juxtapose modes of

⁸¹ James Beattie, *Dissertations Moral and Critical, in Two Volumes: On Memory and Imagination* (Dublin: np, 1783), 1:7.

⁸² “Proceedings from a Public Meeting Called to Honor the Memory of Sir Walter Scott,” in John McVickar, *Tribute to the Memory of Sir Walter Scott, Baronet* (New York: George P. Scott, 1833), pp. v–vii, v.

social remembrance that celebrate the aesthetic and affective imagination of audiences as well as reading groups.

First, I discuss a monument erected to Sir Walter Scott's memory in New York City that reveals the fluidity and portability of collectively held beliefs in the power of the artist to influence future generations and that makes explicit the kinds of memorial claims on the present that later theorists of social memory investigate. Second, I explore the technology of the stereograph as an example of one variety of the memorial and affective experience that demonstrates the ways in which social memory is capable of being understood (and reproduced) through various technological media, on the one hand, and as a device for instruction and pleasure, on the other hand. By looking at the stereographic experience and the ways in which it was understood to have social significance, we may have access into understanding more fully how men and women in the nineteenth century responded both to the issues of affectively identifying with another as well as preserving and transmitting that experience. My goal in this section is to draw together discourses of affect, imagination, memory, and the past in order to reveal how nineteenth-century reading practices may have been understood across disciplinary boundaries. And, finally, I examine how Scott's first novel, *Waverley* (1814), reveals the methods by which social memory was codified in imaginative and (imagined) communities on a textual level through the idioms of loss, mourning, and trauma.⁸³ (This final point will be taken up in further detail in the following chapters.) In concluding this

⁸³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1982).

chapter, I argue that the genre of the historical novel, as inaugurated by Scott, is deemed significant to the communication of social memory among contemporary groups and their successor members through its power to instruct and mold the affective development of its readers. What this chapter suggests, in the end, is that a new form of historical consciousness was being delineated in the nineteenth century that underscored the role of the private, inner life as vital to public action.

On 19 Monday 1832, at one o' clock in the afternoon, over seventy men met at the Merchants' Exchange, on Wall Street, in New York City, to discuss the most appropriate and effective way to join with their Scottish counterparts in honoring the memory of Sir Walter Scott, who had passed away almost two months to the day before their meeting. Included among their numbers were popular American author Washington Irving (1783–1859), author and soon-to-be diplomat to London and then to Berlin Theodore S. Fay (1807–98), U. S. Representative for New York Campbell P. White (1787–1859), poet, author of “Thanatopsis,” and editor of the *New York Evening Post* William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878), and author and editor of the *American Monthly Magazine* Charles Fenno Hoffman (1806–84). This was a gathering of the various “literati” and “old merchants” of New York as many of them would be known in late nineteenth-century histories of American literature and capitalism respectively. They were intellectuals, entrepreneurs, writers, and politicians. Many of them were Scottish or of Scottish descent, and they resolved to celebrate the life and death of one of the greatest

novelists of their time as well as to express their sorrow to his surviving family members. They collected funds for the erection of a monument to him to be built in New York or, if more convenient, the funds were to be transmitted to Edinburgh for a monument there.⁸⁴

Forty years after the committee adopted their various resolutions, the Scott Monument was erected in Central Park, commissioned by Scottish residents in New York City—some of whom had been present at that very first meeting—to celebrate the centennial of Scott’s birth. It was created by Sir John Steell, sculptor of the Scott Monument erected in Edinburgh in 1845. *The New York Times* placed the story of its unveiling on the front page of its 3 November 1872 edition, recounting that over 5,000 people were in attendance; that an escort was provided by “a battalion of Highlanders of the Seventy-ninth Regiment, National Guard, and the Caledonian Club”; and that three bands performed.⁸⁵ The overtures played were, appropriately enough, “Waverley” by the French composer Hector Berlioz (1803–69), a dedicated fan of Sir Walter Scott’s novels, and the overture to “Guy Mannering,” by English composer Sir Henry Bishop (1786–1855). The ceremony concluded with the bands performing “God Save the Queen” and “Hail Columbia.” Befitting the formality of the event, a Scott Monument dinner was held at six o’clock in the evening at that most venerable of nineteenth-century American dining establishments, Delmonico’s.

⁸⁴ McVickar, see esp. pp. 3, 5–6.

⁸⁵ “Sir Walter Scott, Unvailing [sic] the Statue at Central Park Yesterday,” *New York Times* (3 November 1872): 1.

Richard Irvin, Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, first addressed the crowd. Before unveiling what he hoped would be an “enduring memorial,” he briefly thanked those who had helped in the enormous production of creating and transporting the pedestal and statue from Aberdeen, including David Duncan of the Crown Office at Edinburgh. According to Irvin, “[m]oved only by his love of art and veneration for the memory of his country’s great poet and novelist, [Duncan] voluntarily took upon himself the conduct of the details connected with procuring the statue and pedestal, disbursing our funds, and watching over the whole work from its commencement to its safe embarkation for the shores of America.”⁸⁶ In thanking the Henderson Brothers of “the Anchor line of steamers,” he observed that “They conveyed the whole of our ponderous shipment across the Atlantic without any expense to us, thus demonstrating that enlightened generosity and interest in the elegancies and adornments of life are quite in harmony with the highest degree of commercial sagacity and enterprise.”⁸⁷ Through the trope of “enlightened generosity,” he establishes a link between the commercial, aesthetic, and memorial cultures of the transatlantic nineteenth century. This is conventional for the mode in which monuments dedicated to the memory of popular men and women were often discussed. In an era of monumental gift-giving among nations—from the three Cleopatra’s Needles erected in Paris, London, and New York City to the Statue of Liberty—and outright theft or controversial removal of the relics and artifacts—

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

such as the Elgin Marbles—of other countries by colonizing nations, nineteenth-century communities were seemingly obsessed with possessing the physical manifestations of social memory or with representing value by creating grand memorials around which cultural narratives could be produced. In many cases they spared no expense to obtain these objects.⁸⁸

Designers of physical monuments in the built environment are necessarily invested in questions of placement, of the specificities of space, which open up philosophical discussions about the role of permanency, preservation, and ownership in and by the community. Andrew H. Green, City Controller and Vice-President of the Department of Public Parks, for instance, following Irvin, proclaimed upon the statue's unveiling that "From this time this monument becomes the public property, and to those who are charged with the keeping of the grounds the people will look for its proper protection and preservation." Green went on to describe the placement of the statue—in "this place, which it is to embellish, and where it is to stand, at once an ornament and an example"—in spatial terms that comport with the Park Commission's stated mission:

In the disposition of works of this monumental character, always difficult in public grounds, it is the intention of the Park Commissioners so to arrange them

⁸⁸ The Washington Monument is a good example of this. After decades of delay on its construction, the obelisk was finally completed after the U.S. Civil War in the mid 1880s. Its dedication, then, came to represent not only the celebration of the nation's first president but also a symbol of renewed strength and unity following war. It is worth mentioning that its completion occurs almost simultaneously with the transportation from Egypt and erection in New York City's Central Park of another obelisk, Cleopatra's Needle. It has been argued that the ancient Egyptian obelisk was sought after to symbolize the global importance of New York City, a city, in other words, on par with London and Paris.

that the visitor, whether citizen or stranger, as he proceeds along this spacious Mall, shall on either side recognize enduring memorials of the worthiest and best of all climes and nationalities. At the head of one of these columns, by the munificence of your associates, stands first the representation of the man who did so much to illustrate the land of his birth and to celebrate the people of whom he was, and the annals of whose glories and sterling virtues he had introduced to successive generations. We receive this tribute of the affection of his own people most welcomingly. We feel that he is of us, as well as of you.⁸⁹

Green delineates a notion of social memory that builds upon the connections between the memorial project and material culture to include space, time, affiliation, inheritance, and even cosmopolitanism. (He acknowledges the Scottish residents of New York City who, he says, “have done so much in the development of this great and liberal, because cosmopolitan, City.”)⁹⁰ These are, ultimately, issues of continuity that eschew many of the conventional markers of group identity—race, religion, nationality, and so on. Here a group of individuals is linked via the social bonds of artistic appreciation. To be sure, difference is noted by Green’s use of the phrase “his own people,” but Scott’s appeal sufficiently bridges the divide created by nationality. In fact, Scott is spoken of in intimate terms: “We feel that he is of us, as well as of you.” He is, in other words, vital

⁸⁹ “Sir Walter Scott,” p. 1.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

to what makes “us” a group, and his memory and works are worth remembering so that the “us” remains constituted as such in the future.

Commemorative celebrations and monuments symbolize the desire for continuity among a group’s membership. It is believed that the celebration and the monument will communicate to future generations lessons of social value. This was expressed by acclaimed poet and translator of Homer’s *Illiad* and *The Odyssey* William Cullen Bryant, one of the members present at the gathering in 1832, who was the last to address the crowd at the final unveiling decades later. “As I look round on this assembly,” he observed, “I perceive few persons of my own age—few who can remember, as I can, the rising and setting of this brilliant luminary of modern literature. I well recollect the time when Scott, then thirty-four years of age, gave to the world his *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, the first of his works which awakened the enthusiastic admiration that afterward attended all that he wrote. In that poem the spirit of the old Scottish ballads—the most beautiful of their class—lived again. In it we had all their fire, their rapid narrative, their unlabored graces, their pathos, animating a story to which he had given a certain epic breadth and unity.”⁹¹ Bryant invites those who stand with him to celebrate the artist, his life, his extraordinary popularity, and long-reaching influence. In closing his address, he deliberately draws together memory, landscape, and imagination.

⁹¹ Ibid.

And now as the statue of Scott is set up in this beautiful Park, which a few years since, possessed no human associations, historical or poetic, connected with its shades, its lawns, its rocks, and its waters, these grounds become peopled with new memories. Henceforth the silent earth at this spot will be eloquent of old traditions; the airs that stir the branches of the trees will whisper of feats of chivalry to the visitor. All that vast crowd of ideal personages created by the imagination of Scott will enter with his sculptured effigy, and remain—Fergus and Flora McIvor, Meg Merrilles and Dirck Hatteraik, the Antiquary and his sister, and Edie Ochiltree, Rob Roy, and Helen Macgregor, and Baillie Jarvie and Dandie Dinmont, and Diana Vernon and Old Mortality—but the night would be upon us before I could go through the muster-roll of this great army. They will pass in endless procession around the statue of him in whose prolific brain they had their birth, until the language which we speak shall perish, and the spot on which we stand shall be again a woodland wilderness.⁹²

Bryant envisions a gallery of exemplary figures, a stone record of the “Great Men” of history, of which Scott is just the first; it is a record at once both commemorative and edifying. But he goes further by claiming that the monument itself will invoke memories of another—literary record—that emerges out of a shared reading experience. The “muster-roll of this great army” is after all fictional. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–

⁹² Ibid.

1834) would probably have agreed with this sentiment; he wrote of Scott, for instance, that “the number of characters *so good* produced by one man, and in so rapid a succession, must ever remain an illustrious phenomenon in literature.”⁹³ The site of the Scott monument, then, is one that speaks to the expansion of social bonds outward from the celebration of a beloved kinsman or colleague to a collectively held investment in his aesthetic vision and historical imagination.

Bryant describes a place that is, as Pierre Nora would define in the later twentieth century, one of *les lieux de mémoire*, “memory places” or “sites of memory,” an idea Nora re-conceptualizes for a French historical context from such important texts on memory as Frances Yates’s *The Art of Memory* (1966) and Maurice Halbwach’s *On Collective Memory* (1925).⁹⁴ Nora explains the “sites of memory” in terms that speak to the often violent nature characteristic of the loss of the past. “Our curiosity about the places in which memory is crystallized, in which it finds refuge,” he writes, “is associated with this specific moment in French history, a turning point in which a sense of rupture with the past is inextricably bound up with a sense that a rift has occurred in memory. But that rift has stirred memory sufficiently to raise the question of its embodiment: there are sites, *lieux de mémoire*, in which a residual sense of continuity remains. *Lieux de mémoire* exist because there are no longer any *milieux de mémoire*, settings in which

⁹³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge qtd. in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, ed. John O. Hayden (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), pp. 178–184, 180.

⁹⁴ Pierre Nora, “From *Lieux de mémoire* to *Realms of Memory*,” Preface to the English Edition of *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, ed. Nora, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996), 1:xv–xxiv, xv.

memory is a real part of everyday experience.”⁹⁵ While Nora records a rift between history and memory for a late twentieth-century audience, the nineteenth-century audience celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of an eighteenth-century birth seems to accept that the divide between memory and history is neither as rigid nor as wide as later theorists would make it. The rupture, more specifically and obviously, is the death of Scott, which those funding the monument hope to suture. Yet as the passage from Bryant makes clear, Scott’s place in history is one at which the past was reinvoked and given new vigor. They are attempting, in other words, to create a space that is not only dedicated to memory but also committed to shaping future groups built around a shared sense of aesthetic value.

This site of memory draws together the fictional and the real. It speaks to a concept of the novel and narrative as having actual communal influence. Images of the artist and references to his or her work were often credited with the ability to influence group identity and even encourage or deter social action. For this reason, the authors and their works were referred to in language suggestive of a monument. As Ann Rigney has noted, the artist’s works may even be likened to “portable monuments,” especially his or her novels, which circulated with far greater ease in the nineteenth century than in any previous era. Novels thus reached a broad audience and had the capacity to shape the kind of communal memory that the physical monument sought to influence.⁹⁶ Scott’s

⁹⁵ Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” in *Realms of Memory*, 1:1–20, 1.

⁹⁶ Ann Rigney, “Portable Monuments: Literature, Cultural Memory, and the Case of Jeanie Deans,” *Poetics Today* 25.2 (Summer 2004): 361–96.

historical novels, in particular, were instrumental in not only inaugurating the genre of the British historical novel but also influencing the American and Continental European traditions of historical fiction. There are no shortages, for instance, of influence studies based on Scott's artistic reach both across ethnic and national cultures and time. And his work was rather extraordinarily credited by some with preventing rebellion in England, a claim I discuss later in this chapter.

I have chosen to linger on the unveiling of the Scott Monument in New York City rather than the extraordinary Gothic monument devoted to his honor in Edinburgh, designed by architect George Meikle Kemp and under which is the other Scott Monument also by Steell, or the establishment of his bust in Westminster Abbey in the 1890s because the American monument allows me to reflect on at least four developments in nineteenth-century memorial culture. First, memory objects were increasingly embedded in a complex of materialism and commodification that simultaneously involved an individual in the public, economic realm while celebrating a private, emotional event (or, as in the Scott Monument, explicitly making public what would otherwise be private). Second, displaced populations often employed social memory as a means by which to construct temporal continuity that both relied upon and resisted rootedness. Third, individuals and communities used memory as a lens through which to reconfigure various modes of social perception. And fourth, literary influence, imitation, and admiration were often available methods for the memorial project that

transcended spatiotemporal boundaries and categorical lines such as gender, race, and nationality.

In his eulogium for Scott, solicited by the 1832 committee, Reverend John McVickar preempts questions of what warrants a specifically *American* tribute to Scott.

. . . shall it be asked on what ground we, as Americans, stand forth to testify our sympathy on this occasion; I answer, on the ground of an equal inheritance as part of the great family of civilized man, as men who can honor worth, and reverence genius wherever it was born. But again, Scott was the poet of nature, the delineator of his species in every climate and on every soil, so that wherever his works were known, there was he to be regarded as a native and a denizen, and there should now be heard for him the mourning voice of lamentation or of praise. Or, if still nearer claim be wanting, can it not be found? "If blood be warmer than water," to use a Scottish adage, shall not we, in whose veins flows the blood of a common ancestry, count ourselves nearer to Scott than the dwellers upon the Seine, the Rhine, or the Tiber? Are we not in truth one nation with that which gave him birth, in all the highest features of national likeness; a common language, common faith, and a common literature? Let us leave it to politicians to cloak under the plea of patriotism those hateful, jealous passions, which as charity condemns and religion abhors, so should literature despise: to us belong, certainly

at least on the present occasion, wider views of the bonds of brotherhood, and a holier interpretation of the claims of a common kindred.⁹⁷

McVickar makes a claim for community based upon an aesthetic identification. Fiction and the imagination are granted, in this instance, certain powers for social organization, and their power is worth preserving.

McVickar ends his eulogium with a call for copyright protection of Scott's works from the U. S. Congress, which he considers to be a fitting monument, a legal testament to the author's greatness that would outlast, in his opinion, any physical one.⁹⁸ He had looked upon the venerable Scott as a living monument at his home in Abbotsford where he was briefly a guest toward the end of Scott's life, in the midst of the novelist's financial speculations that would ultimately and spectacularly fail and believed that the right to commemorate was not bound by geography or genealogy.⁹⁹ There are, in fact, other claims upon the past and past lives to be made outside the bounds of conventional categories of analysis such as race, nationality, religion, and even family. Memory, with its affiliations, allegiances, and associations—a favorite term of the late eighteenth and

⁹⁷ McVickar, "Eulogium," in *Tribute to the Memory of Sir Walter Scott*, pp. 9–42, 10. The "Eulogium" is not only a work of commemoration but also a personal accounting of Scott's life. In it, McVickar examines the biography of this author from his formative years to his financial decline, touching variously upon the author's choice to remain anonymous for so long after the publication of *Waverley*, his lack of remuneration from sales of his books in the United States, and his unprecedented and far-reaching influence.

⁹⁸ McVickar, p. 42.

⁹⁹ McVickar, p. 38.

nineteenth centuries—is malleable, capable of becoming situated in the fluid spaces of shifting and contestatory kinships.

The monument park and the novel are the spaces in which memory is socialized, metaphorized, and ultimately democratized in a world of rapid social and industrial change. They are also cultural records—physical and textual—of an era at once bygone and ever present. For many in the nineteenth century, preserving and if necessary restoring these records became a social imperative. In an 1866 entry in *Notes and Queries*, a French translator of Chaucer made “A Plea” on the ancient poet’s behalf:

May I not be allowed, as Chaucer’s translator, to protest against the Vandalism that would destroy so valuable a relic of that great poet’s century, as the time-honoured “Tabard,” whence his pilgrims started from Canterbury, to make way for a railway station where few will know even the name of Chaucer, and fewer still care for him or his works? Must modern progress be converted into a Juggernaut’s car, always busy in eradicating the traces of the past? Is its motto to be “Delenda est Carthago”?

Whilst Paris is being shorn of all its picturesque features, and the traditions of medieval times being rubbed out one after the other, I hitherto always admired the pious care with which the tangible relics of a bygone era were cherished in your provincial towns and out-of-the-way nooks. I have seen Shakespeare’s dwelling honoured as a shrine, and the memory of even inferior

geniuses lovingly fostered in the places they inhabited, and where they exercised their influence; and shall the father of English poetry not excite sufficient reverence to prevent this contemplated desecration?¹⁰⁰

The plea is for much more than the preservation of a marker. It is an acknowledgement of the relationship between memory and place that blurs the boundaries between the real and the imagined. The writer suggests that there is a close connection between the cultural record of a nation's great artists and the places they have "inhabited" in "real" life and also immortalized in their works. There is a sense of urgency to protect the landscapes of social memory. In the next section, I will analyze one method by which the men and the women of the nineteenth century sought to preserve these landscapes, using a new technological medium that promised not only to transmit these important cultural landscapes to contemporary audiences but also to future generations.

Social memory has the power to bring disparate groups together. One of the ways this is achieved is through the use of various and popular media. The monument and the commemorative ceremony, the novel and the poem, the national anthem and the spiritual

¹⁰⁰ Le Chevalier de Chatelain, "A Plea for Chaucer," *Notes & Queries* 212 (20 January 1866): 57. The Tabard, which had been known as the Talbot for some time was, in fact, destroyed in 1873 in order to make way for the railroad.

hymn—all function as modes of social remembrance that work to communicate a sense of the past worth preserving, even possibly worth restoring.¹⁰¹

The nineteenth-century invention of the photograph is a striking example of one such way in which the past is preserved and made available to broad groups of individuals. American physician and writer Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (1809–94) called the photograph the “invention of the mirror with a memory.”¹⁰² In his 1859 article “The Stereoscope and the Stereograph,” Holmes considers the various developments in photography from the daguerreotype to the photograph to the stereograph and concludes that the progress of the invention has accomplished the following: “Form is henceforth divorced from matter. In fact, matter as a visible object is of no great use any longer, except as a mould on which form is shaped.”¹⁰³ The invention of photography and its role in nineteenth-century British society is necessarily outside the scope of this dissertation, but the stereoscopic image, I argue, is a powerful symbol of the relationships among technology, the image, and social memory, which works to shape group identity in the nineteenth century.

¹⁰¹ On the importance of music to the constitution of a community around a shared past, see Meike Holscher’s essay “Performances, Souvenirs, and Music: The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria 1897,” in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, eds. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 173–86. See also Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876–1953* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2002).

¹⁰² Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., “The Stereoscope and the Stereograph,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 3.20 (June 1859): 738–48, 739.

¹⁰³ Holmes, p. 747.

It should come as no surprise that stereographs of the spaces of Scott's life and works were very popular in the nineteenth century following the novelist's death in 1832 (and of course the invention of the stereoscope several years later). Scottish photographer George Washington Wilson (1823–93) made a series of stereographs that included views of the Scott Monument in Edinburgh, of Scott's tomb and the grounds at Dryburgh Abbey, and of his home Abbotsford.¹⁰⁴ In addition to these historical locations are stereographs of landscapes and notable sites made by several other photographers, which are said to be settings from Scott's fictional work, including one of Trosachs, Scotland, noted by the photographer to be the setting for "The Lady of the Lake," and one, according to the caption, of "Abbey de la Louch Castle, Leicestershire," which the caption further claims is "the Scene of Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*." Produced as they were after the author's death, these stereographs are designed to be part commemorative, part informative, and wholly entertaining. (One stereograph of the dining room at Abbotsford, which bears a caption reading "Room in which Sir Walter died," seems unnecessarily gratuitous.)

Stereographs featuring landmarks made famous by Scott's prose obviously reveal that the collective experience of reading his works was important enough to be transmitted into another medium. These stereographs, though, also allowed men and

¹⁰⁴ The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland records a list of several stereoscopic views of the Scott Monument from multiple vantage points from its construction to beyond its completion. Accessed 19 August 2010
 <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/74114/photographs/edinburgh+princes+street+scott+monument/?z=20?&sort_typ=copyright&sort_ord=asc>.

women to participate in an event that gave dimensionality to Scott's words. They show a culture invested in providing the tangible mementoes of an imagined world much like the desires of those erecting monuments.

The stereographs that capitalized on spaces made famous by Scott were absorbed into a wider cultural geography of Scotland. These images were, for instance, featured in so-called tours of Scotland, in which an arm-chair traveler could have access to the visual experience of being among historical and aesthetic landscapes. These stereographs, though, offered an even more important experience, which was simultaneously being felt by novel readers in the nineteenth century: affective identification between reader and text. One image of Abbotsford, for instance, shows a male figure rowing across the field of vision with Abbotsford in the background. One is invited, it would seem, to imagine this man as the place's last inhabitant, to wonder about his daily activities, his life and ultimately his death. As with the Scott Monument, one is invited to possess the past and its narrative possibilities.

The stereograph as viewed through the stereoscope, an instrument first developed by English scientist Charles Wheatstone (1802–75), has the uncanny, figurative powers of temporal and spatial transportation, which ultimately allows the viewer to become a part of the image in a way previously not experienced. "The first effect of looking at a good photograph through the stereoscope is a surprise such as no painting ever produced. The mind feels its way into the very depths of the picture," Holmes explains.¹⁰⁵ The

¹⁰⁵ Holmes, p. 744.

complexity of detail alone may even activate the narrative and affective impulses of the viewer, allowing the stereograph, Holmes claims, “to be the card of introduction to make all mankind acquaintances.”¹⁰⁶ In viewing a stereograph of Alloway Kirk, made famous by Robert Burns, Holmes suggests that knowledge of one’s fellow human beings may be gained through the stereoscopic experience.

This distinctness of the lesser details of a building or a landscape often gives us incidental truths which interest us more than the central object of the picture. Here is Alloway Kirk, in the churchyard of which you may read a real story by the side of the ruin that tells of more romantic fiction. There stands the stone “Erected by James Russell, seedsman, Ayr, in memory of his children,”—three little boys, James, and Thomas, and John, all snatched away from him in the space of three successive summer-days, and lying under the matted grass in the shadow of the old witch-haunted walls. It was Burns’s Alloway Kirk we paid for, and we find we have bought a share in the griefs of James Russell, seedsman; for is not the stone that tells this blinding sorrow of real life the true centre of the picture, and not the roofless pile which reminds us of an idle legend?¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Holmes, p. 745.

Here the historical, the literary, and the memorial combine with the imagination to create a sense of affective connection that pulls individuals from the margins of history to the center of scopic examination by a viewer removed by distance and time. The grief of a seedsman is given historical significance it might otherwise not have had because of the cultural and physical connections it shares with the works of a popular poet, symbols from whose works were deemed important enough to transmit through a new cultural and technological medium. Holmes refers to another example of this affective connection when he describes viewing a stereograph of the Lake of Brienz. He notes that on one side of the stereograph, “a vaguely hinted female figure stands by the margin of the fair water; on the other side of the picture she is not seen.”¹⁰⁸ This glimpse of a figure is enough, however, to inspire the viewer’s connection to her: “This is life,” we are told, “we seem to see her come and go. All the longings, passions, experiences, possibilities of womanhood animate that gliding shadow which has flitted through our consciousness, nameless, dateless, featureless, yet more profoundly real than the sharpest portraits traced by a human hand.”¹⁰⁹ The depth of the image is given dimensionality beyond those coordinates of space and time to include that of empathy with one’s fellow being. This is an experience in which the narrative impulse is activated, in which the story-telling faculty is invoked. There is a desire to feel with this life in the image, to set the woman, as it were, into relief.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

This is precisely how friend and correspondent of Scott and improver of the stereoscope Sir David Brewster (1781–1868) imagined the invention could be used. In his *Stereoscope: Its History, Theory, and Construction, with Its Application to the Fine and Useful Arts and to Education* (1856), Brewster writes that the stereoscope had practical uses for instruction. In fact, “Every experiment in science, and every instrument depending on scientific principles, when employed for the purpose of amusement, must necessarily be instructive.”¹¹⁰ He suggests that the stereoscope could be particularly suited to bringing to life various cultural “scenes,” including those that featured the lives of everyday men and women:

In a list of about 150 binocular pictures issued by the London Stereoscopic Company, under the title of “Miscellaneous Subjects of the ‘Wilkie’ character,” there are many of an amusing kind, in which scenes of common life are admirably represented. Following out the same idea, the most interesting scenes in our best comedies and tragedies might be represented with the same distinctness and relief as if the actors were on the stage. Events and scenes in ancient and modern history might be similarly exhibited, and in our day, binocular pictures of trials, congresses, political, legislative, and religious assemblies, in which the leading actors were represented, might be provided for the stereoscope.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Sir David Brewster, *The Stereoscope: Its History, Theory, and Construction, with Its Application to the Fine and Useful Arts and to Education* (1856) (Charleston SC: BiblioLife, nd), p. 204.

¹¹¹ Brewster, pp. 204–05.

Brewster's faith in the stereoscope to instruct its viewers by setting in relief scenes familiar and unfamiliar, fictional and nonfictional, ancient and modern, and representative of both personal and public life—scenes of “common life” as well as of those in power—points to a nineteenth-century belief in the interdisciplinary construction of knowledge. As one contributor for *The Outlook* explained in 1898, “truth in one field is truth in all fields, and a discovery in physiology is, sooner or later, a discovery in philosophy or theology.”¹¹² Progress in any one field—science, philosophy, history, literature, and so on—was relevant to another and vital to the self-culture of nineteenth-century men and women.

As Brewster's list suggests, the stereoscopic experience is one in which viewers are brought together by a belief in what is culturally and socially important. It is also democratic in nature. The stereoscope and its images can, Brewster argues, anticipate a museum culture that draws the smallest communities together with the largest in celebration, even wonderment, over the items, lives, and sentiments of the past. He speaks to a notion of permanence of the social and historical records that draw together a desire for a wide museum culture that is both preceded and augmented by stereographic instruction. Accordingly, he argues that “Every school, indeed, should have a museum, however limited and humble. Even from within its narrow sphere objects of natural history and antiquities might be collected, and duplicates exchanged; and we are sure that

¹¹² [Unknown], “The Life of the Spirit in Times of Change,” *The Outlook* 59.6 (11 June 1898): 364–65, 365.

many a chimney-piece in the district would surrender a tithe of its curiosities for the public use. Were the British Museum, and other overflowing collections, to distribute among provincial museums the numerous duplicates which they possess, they would gradually pass into the schools, and before a quarter of a century elapsed, museums would be found in every proper locality.”¹¹³ Until the establishment of such a broad museum culture, though, the stereoscope and its views can aid in the educational system, but Brewster cautions that provisions must be made to protect and preserve the images. Several years later, in fact, Holmes would call for a national library of stereographs in the United States to do just that, “a comprehensive and systematic stereographic library, where all men can find the special forms they particularly desire to see as artists, or as scholars, or as mechanics, or in any other capacity.”¹¹⁴ An open library is necessary for the widening of democratic principles. As George Edgar Vincent made clear in his 1904 article for *The Library Journal*, libraries in an American context (with references also to the national museums in Zurich and Nuremberg at the turn of the twentieth century), “have become more and more democratic, either through direct support from state and municipality, or through the spirit in which trustees and librarians have administered privately founded institutions. They are pushing steadily toward the ideal of an intelligent democracy, the free and habitual resort of every man, woman and child to the easily accessible, well-organized, and wisely selected traditions of civilized mankind.

¹¹³ Brewster, p. 195.

¹¹⁴ Holmes, p. 748.

The libraries are seeking to put the social memory at the service of the whole social body.”¹¹⁵

The stereoscope and its views along with the novel offer broad access to knowledge for wide audiences. Indeed, as American historian and archaeologist James Henry Breasted (1865–1935) intimated in his *Egypt through the Stereoscope: A Journey through the Land of the Pharaohs* (1905), a work intended for “stay-at-home travel,” “By this means, then, the joys of travel can be extended to that large class of our people, who thirst for an acquaintance with the distant lands of other ages, but are prevented by the expense involved, or by the responsibilities of home, business or profession.”¹¹⁶ In this, as well, the stereoscopic journey joins with reading—quite literally with these types of texts that combined historiographical text with contemporary stereographical views—to provide access to knowledge and information previously reserved for wealthier classes who could afford travelling to exotic locales. Conservative historian Archibald Alison had noted in regards to reading historical novels that “Seated in our armchairs, with the wintry winds howling around us, with our feet at a blazing fire, we are transported by the wand of the novelist to the most remote ages and distant countries of the earth.”¹¹⁷

Museums and libraries that situate a visitor before the visual, material, and textual records of the past and novels and stereographic images that allow for armchair travel all

¹¹⁵ George Edgar Vincent, “The Library and the Social Memory,” *The Library Journal* 29.11 (November 1904): 577–84, 580–81.

¹¹⁶ James Henry Breasted, *Egypt through the Stereoscope: A Journey through the Land of the Pharaohs* (New York and London: Underwood and Underwood, 1908), pp. 11–12.

¹¹⁷ Alison, “The Historical Romance,” p. 344.

point to a broader civic concern with citizenship in a liberal society, one shaped, that is, by a desire “for an acquaintance with the distant lands of other ages.” Individual self-culture or civic instruction is heightened by a familiarity with the scenes of the past, whether real or imagined, whole or fractured. There is, for instance, a particular sense of wonderment accorded by the ruin. The imagination is encouraged to make the image of such ruins whole—a process that invokes philosophical questions of preservation and restoration, fragility and permanence, which Scott’s novels take up, as I will show in my reading of *Waverley* below.

In a decade that began with the Great Exhibition of 1851, at which Queen Victoria had been impressed by the stereoscope and its views created by French optician Louis Jules Dubosq (1817–86), which led to an increase in the popularity of the invention,¹¹⁸ Brewster and Holmes express a desire for the preservation and display of objects, images, and icons that celebrate the dynamic relationship between the past and the present. In Brewster’s call, the stereograph stands in for the real object; in Holmes, form and matter disassociate; yet, in both, the idea invoked by the image communicates meaning and does so to a wide audience of members with varying social status. The stereograph helps, in other words, to shape the sensibilities of a community of viewers

¹¹⁸ “Stereoscopy,” in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, ed. John Hannavy (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), p. 1339.

who are given access to the past “in relief.”¹¹⁹ Collections of stereographs from all over the world became enormously popular in the last decade of the nineteenth and early decade of the twentieth century, as historians teamed up to work with stereographic production companies in order to provide a “tour” or “journey”—a historical text accompanied by stereographic images—to India, Russia, Greece, Egypt, China, and so on. Like their novelistic counterparts, these stereoscopic “scenes” were capable of transporting their viewers to other temporal and geographical locations. Thus, stereoscopic images invoked feelings of displacement, identification, suspense, and amusement, and, in this, the stereoscopic experience is similar both to physical travelling and reading.

British novelist and historian Sir Walter Besant (1836–1901) had claimed that successful novelists “will not go wrong if they bear in mind the simple rule that nothing should be admitted which does not advance the story, illustrate the characters, bring into stronger relief the hidden forces which act upon them, their emotions, their passions, and their intentions.”¹²⁰ The stereograph also, it was argued, set the emotions into relief. American theologian and biblical scholar William Byron Forbrush’s (1868–1927) *Illuminated Lessons on the Life of Jesus*, for instance, was designed to bring an audience to a deeper biographical and affective understanding of Jesus through a combined history

¹¹⁹ N. R. Carmichael observed that “The principal defect of a photograph of a landscape as a representation of the original is its lack of relief.” See Carmichael, “Stereoscopic Pictures,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 12.2 (October 1904): 178–80, 178.

¹²⁰ Walter Besant, “The Art of Fiction: Lecture Delivered at the Royal Institution, April 25, 1884,” in *The Art of Fiction* [which includes essays of that title by Besant and Henry James] (Boston: Cupples, Upham, and Co., 1885), pp. 3–48, 24.

of the Holy Land, the stereographic images of it, and biblical scripture readings and historical accounts of the region. He wrote that with the stereoscope, “You have given the scholar not only the same visual impressions, but some of the very same emotions that he would feel in the sacred places themselves.”¹²¹ This differed from previous experience with photographs of the region, he argued, because “the photographed landscapes are given by the double lenses of the stereoscope the third dimension. What appeared to the unaided eye as flat, tame and lifeless, now has depth, distance, perspective, and in the foreground human figures spring up as distinct and individual as if alive.”¹²² He goes on to cite another “authority” on the stereographic experience, fellow clergyman Jesse Lymun Hurlbut (1843–1930), who wrote in *Traveling the Holy Land through the Stereoscope* that “The essential thing for us is not that we have the actual physical place or object before us, as a tourist does, rather than a picture, but that we have some at least of the same facts of consciousness, ideas, and emotions, in the presence of the picture, that the tourist gains in the presence of the scene. This is entirely possible with the stereotype.”¹²³ Or, as Forbrush sums it up, “we teach the heart through the eye what all the moral homilies in the world could not convey.”¹²⁴

Albert E. Osborne wrote that the stereograph was, in fact, the best visual medium for invoking emotional responses.

¹²¹ William Byron Forbrush, *The Illuminated Lessons on the Life of Jesus* (New York and London: Underwood and Underwood, 1903), p. 19.

¹²² Forbrush, p. 18.

¹²³ Forbrush, p. 19.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

The stereograph is the climax of all in giving the emotions of actual sight.—It remains for us now to test the various kinds of pictures by the third advantage of actual sight—their ability to give us the emotions that we should get by seeing the object or place itself. First of all, it will be evident that we shall *get the emotions of the place or object itself in connection with a picture, to just the degree in which we are able to forget that we are looking at a picture and to think that we are in the presence of the place itself and its surroundings.* Now this very experience can be had, it is found, in connection with the stereograph and the stereoscope. While looking at the stereoscopic representation of a place it is possible for a person to lose all consciousness of his immediate bodily surroundings, and to gain, for appreciable lengths of time, a distinct consciousness or experience of being in the place itself. It follows, then, that whenever we do get this sense of location in a certain place—Rome for instance—in the stereoscope, we must get part at least of the very same emotions which we should experience there.¹²⁵

The sensory experience is one here in which the visual overrides the physical. In other words, the image has power to alter consciousness and bodily awareness. As he explains,

¹²⁵ Albert E. Osborne, *The Stereograph and the Stereoscope, with Special Maps and Books forming a Travel System: What They Mean for Individual Development. What They Promise for the Spread of Civilization* (New York and London: Underwood and Underwood, 1909), pp. 26–27. Emphasis in the original.

in this regard, the stereoscopic experience is without equal among technological achievements:

This is the unique and unrivalled claim for the stereoscope and the stereograph. For it is also found that this sense of location in the presence of the object or place represented cannot be had in connection with any other kind of picture, which does not give perfect depth for the eyes, and the setting of which, in our hand, in a gallery or on the screen, can be seen. The mind never loses consciousness of our location in the place where our body and such a picture are. In the stereoscope, on the other hand, with all our immediate surroundings shut out by the hood of the instrument, the representation standing out before us in all three dimensions, life size and with almost perfect detail, the conditions are so radically changed that the radically different experience outlined above is made possible.¹²⁶

Bringing lives into relief, attempting to animate them for instructive or pleasurable purposes was an important concern for those who believed that stereographs could impart lessons from the past to contemporary and future audiences. The stereograph it can be argued is closely aligned to the novel; both allow the viewer or reader of the image or text to become a part of a narrative that is deeply influenced by the affective experiences regarding the negotiation between time and space.

¹²⁶ Osborne, p. 27.

That the image will always reflect something that has gone before speaks also to the pleasures and lessons made possible by the nature of historical juxtaposition in the development of social memory. It is this juxtaposition that makes Scott's historical novels so entertaining. Objects, monuments, spaces, fragments, and characters from the past are brought forward in *Waverley*, for instance, through a series of temporal and geographical combinations, ruptures, and recombinations. The text is, after all, the fictional account of the last Waverley set next to the historical account of the battle involving the last Stuart contending for the British crown set next to the execution of the last MacIvor. It is a novel about loss and about remembering those lost to the present. It is a novel, in other words, about the interrelated nature of memory, history, and affect that explores how best to communicate and adapt this relationship for the present. If the Scott Monument in New York City is designed as an evocative space to bring together Scott and his fictional characters in an outdoor gallery of sorts and the stereographic image of another monument of Scott or his home or his tomb—this one the famous Gothic monument at Edinburgh—is meant to bring that gallery into the viewer's room, then it is important to read Scott's use of monuments, relics, spaces, and other material memories as designed to create communities around a shared sense of the past that reveals specific nineteenth-century reading practices at work.

In what follows, I will examine the nature of social memory and its various manifestations in Scott's *Waverley*. In so doing, I propose that Scott's depiction of spaces—real and imagined; landscapes—physical and mental; relics—material and

textual; and ruins is part of a larger cultural debate that takes up the decidedly modern questions of preservation and restoration in the personal and political realms. The flourishing of discussions about preservation and restoration in the face of the destruction that accompanies progress is indicative of an increasing turn to memory and its communal and public possibilities in a period marked by great change and even greater loss.

Scott's ascendancy as an acclaimed novelist followed his decline as a popular poet. McVickar assumes that "It will be the lot of some future critic to analyze the causes of this rapid decline of popularity; to determine how far the poet, how far the public were in fault—to me it has always seemed that the author's powers were then in what may be geologically termed their *transition* state; passing from the forms of poetry, to those of romance, or, in other words, that these latter poems had risen in the display of character, but fallen in poetic imagery."¹²⁷ He further records that "the public began to weary of the romantic school: its rhymes were cheap in the market" and that other poets had captivated readers. "Scott himself acknowledges," McVickar instances, "that the consciousness of Byron's advance, in the lists, 'a mighty and unexpected rival' palsied his powers, and made the task of composition in his latter poems 'somewhat heavy and hopeless.'"¹²⁸ McVickar views this as a fortuitous moment: "the failure of his poetry in the presence of

¹²⁷ McVickar, p. 26.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Byron's, (a fact which his family in conversation were more apt to over-state than to deny,) threw him upon a new effort to recover the ground he had lost, and led to one of the most remarkable and successful instances of anonymous authorship, which the literary world had ever witnessed"—that is, the publication of *Waverley, Or 'Tis Sixty Years Since* in 1814.¹²⁹ In the reverend's estimation, this is a cultural crossroads and possibly a test of virtue between the brooding verse of Byron—"ever a dark stream: [wherein] no olive branch of peace ever sweetened its black and bitter waters, which ever and anon settled into stagnant pools of pestilential corruption"—on the one hand, and the morally refined prose of Scott, on the other.¹³⁰ To a twenty-first century reader of both Byron and Scott, the early nineteenth-century religious man may be excused for overstating the cultural stakes in the rise of the former and the decline of the latter in the realm of lyric and morality. But McVickar is right to point to a crossroads in the development of prose upon the publication of Scott's first novel: *Waverley* inaugurates a genre of fiction that takes up the issue of the ever-widening divide between the disciplinary dimension of historical studies and the increased interest in the psychological and sociological significance of memory both to the individual and to the community. *Waverley* offers its readers an example of one mode of social remembrance—the historical novel—that examines the questions of how memory, affect, history, and the imagination come together to influence identity.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ McVickar, p. 32.

Early in *Waverley*, in chapters outlining the young hero's "desultory" education, the narrator notes that Waverley often spent time with his aunt and uncle, and that these hours "were exhausted in listening to the oft-repeated tale of narrative old age."¹³¹ Specifically, Sir Everard and Aunt Rachel recount "Family tradition and genealogical history" for Edward. This is an act of memory transmission, during which Waverley's "imagination, the predominant faculty of his mind, was frequently excited" (pp. 15–16). As Wolfgang Iser argues, "Here we have one important function of the imagination: by investing and reenacting traditional or legendary facts with imaginary human actions and reactions, it can resuscitate the past. Here Scott is simply indicating the way in which the process can take place."¹³² Contrasted to amber, a literal residue of the past, these traditions both function to preserve and to communicate a haphazard collection of random, sometimes important, but sometimes irrelevant information for future generations.

Family tradition and genealogical history, upon which much of Sir Everard's discourse turned, is the very reverse of amber, which, itself a valuable substance, usually includes flies, straws, and other trifles, whereas these studies, being

¹³¹ Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814), ed. Clare Lamont (Oxford and London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998), pp. 11, 13, 15. Subsequent references to *Waverley* will be to this edition and will be parenthetically cited in the text.

¹³² Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 81–100, 94. Iser argues that "historical reality is restored to the present by the imagination, while the imagination fulfills itself by bringing history to life" (p. 96). In this, he echoes sentiments from late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century theorists such as Lewes, Giddings, Vincent, and Halbwachs on the role of the imagination in bringing the past to life through social memory.

themselves very insignificant and trifling, do nevertheless serve to perpetuate a great deal of what is rare and valuable in ancient manners, and to record many curious and minute facts which could have been preserved and conveyed through no other medium. (p. 16)

Tradition and familial history, in other words, have value only insofar as they relate information that imparts socially significant meaning to the contemporary milieu of the family member who receives it. They are part of the “residual store,” from which the past is retrieved, the “social medium,” to use George Henry Lewes’s phrases, into which the individual is born that both shapes and is shaped by him or her.

In these early chapters of the novel, though, the narrator reminds us that Waverley’s education is so haphazard and directionless, he is “like a vessel without a pilot or a rudder,” that he requires the tutelage of an instructor who can harmoniously bring together his fanciful flights through the family library’s books, themselves collected “without much scrutiny or nicety of discrimination,” with serious study of the knowledge contained within and beyond those texts (p. 13). The state of one’s library would seem to be an important indicator of one’s alignment with certain social values. Indeed, Vincent would suggest as much a century later: “The collecting of books and other records, the pursuit of genealogies, the gathering of personal reminiscences may easily become desultory and aimless unless all is done in accordance with a recognized duty, a well-

considered program, and a consistent plan.”¹³³ The family library may function as an institution capable of communicating familial and more broadly civic ideals, but the family library at Waverley-Honour is deficient in this respect.

By the time *Waverley* appeared in print, the notion of the socializing potentials of the family library extended not only to the physical space but also to print compilations and miscellanies that alluded to it. The compilers of a mid-eighteenth-century anthology titled *The Family Library* (second edition, 1752), for instance, set out “to select, with unwearied Diligence, from the best Books, whatever may be useful to improve and enlarge the Mind, recover it out of the Vice and Ignorance which naturally cleave to it, raise its Views and Ideas, and communicate to it new and exalted Pleasure.”¹³⁴ Education and pleasure are interconnected in the compilers’ objective to widen access to great works: “But though Instruction, or the Improvement of the Mind is the sole Object of this Work, it will not nevertheless prevent its being entertaining, by the Variety of Ways in which it will be communicated; for sometimes we shall make Use of pleasing Fables and Allegory, at other Times entertaining Histories, now the Lives of famous Men, now a Display of the innumerable Wonders of the Universe, and frequently will all the Charms of Poetry be called in to our Assistance.”¹³⁵ *The Family Library* was a proposed serial

¹³³ Vincent, “The Social Memory,” *Minnesota Historical Bulletin* 1.5 (February 1916): 249–59, 249.

¹³⁴ [Unknown], “Preface,” in *The Family Library: Or Instructor in Useful Knowledge, Compiled from the Most Eminent Writers, and by the Assistance of Learned and Ingenious Men: Being Calculated to Advance the Cause of Religion and Virtue; And to Improve in All Useful Knowledge the Understanding of Those Who Have Not Time to Read, or Abilities to Purchase Many Books*, 2nd edn. (London: R. Goadby, 1752), pp. 3–6, 4.

¹³⁵ *The Family Library*, pp. 4–5.

production that readers would receive throughout the year and that could then be bound into “two handsome Volumes.” Once bound, the volumes could “be deservedly considered as a FAMILY LIBRARY, seeing it will contain those Things which (if frequently perused) will make Families wise and happy; and it may be handed down as a most valuable Legacy from Father to Son.”¹³⁶ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* would attempt a similar project in the late 1820s, arguing that revolutionary foment made it necessary to counter partisan histories, biographies, and other works produced by the Whigs with select histories and biographies meant for the moral and religious improvement of its conservative readers. These were also to be printed under the title “The Family Library.”¹³⁷ The family library was considered important for communicating tradition and even playing a role in the transmission of textual ideas and material objects, a cultural and legal, and in the case of *Blackwood's* series, political, bequest.

The estate, family traditions, collections, and records, and the systems and emblems of heraldry and genealogy represent contexts in and through which social memory may be constituted and transmitted among relatives. But *Waverley's* narrator is implicitly critical in his examination of these institutions to transmit that memory. The narrator suggests, in other words, that Waverley-Honour and its inhabitants require some form of broader social and historical interaction. Certainly, the young man who stands to

¹³⁶ *The Family Library*, p. 6.

¹³⁷ J. G. Lockhart, “The Family Library,” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 26 (157) (September 1829): 413–36. And in 1841, a new American periodical began circulation—*The Patriarch; Or Family Library Magazine*—with the design of assisting the family in early childhood education and development.

inherit the estate and its memories does. Thus, the young Edward Waverley is commissioned a captain in a military regiment and turned toward a Scotland steeped in cultural and historical significance.

The course of the narrative reflects an educative journey through the past, in which its history, folk culture, symbols, narratives, memorial processes, and affective landscapes are examined and shown to be a powerful force for shaping the young man's identity. At the same time, a story about national identity is being written that seeks to reconcile the politics of memory with the demands of the present. The novelistic interpretation of this negotiation reflects an important give and take between history and affect, key components of social memory, and the manner in which the latter comes to bear on the former with surprising strength. In other words, *Waverley* is a story about how emotions influence historical consciousness both in the text and among its readers.

I would like to review this influence by looking at the artifacts and landscapes of affect that pervade the novel, particularly those relics and ruins that mark individual and communal grief and mourning in the narrative of Edward Waverley's involvement in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. I will then turn to how affective and historical consciousness is being used as a tool for instruction of characters and readers alike. Many historians and history writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries suggest that a close connection among the historical and physical worlds and the psychological and material realms exists. I argue that the novel explores ideologies of preservation, renovation, and restoration of the physical and material worlds as ways to imbue various methods of

coping with loss with historical significance while simultaneously introducing domesticity as a type of renovation of various kinship figurations. Significantly, preservation, renovation, and restoration as well as kinship figurations are, rather paradoxically, marked by violence in this text.

Scott sets a precedent in linking the topographical and historical landscapes of *Waverley*'s setting to the affective landscapes of various characters in the novel by lingering over the anxieties of modernity. I borrow the term *affective landscape* from Karen E. Till who argues that landscapes—both the natural and built environments—are imbued with the emotions of the many individuals inhabiting these landscapes who are often faced with various narratives of loss, grief and mourning, and remembering and forgetting. As she explains, “places are never merely backdrops for action or containers for the past. They are the fluid mosaics and moments of memory, matter, metaphor, scene, and experience that create and mediate social spaces and temporalities. Through place making, people mark social spaces as haunted sites where they can return, make contact with their loss, contain unwanted presences, or confront past injustices.”¹³⁸

While Till's focus is predominantly on urban spaces, in contemporary Berlin specifically, much of what she has to say about affective landscapes is appropriate to other, non-urban and older spaces as well.

Affective landscapes are particularly important in understanding Scott's *Waverley* and its entwinement of psychological states, memory, history, and community. As Kate

¹³⁸ Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minnesota and London: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 8.

Chedgzoy explains, “Thinking of memory in spatial terms offers a way of understanding it as situated within a network of social relations.”¹³⁹ Of course, an association among memory, history, and geography is not new in literature. Memory’s close relationship to the material, physical, and spatial worlds can be traced back to ancient Greek treatises on the topic of remembering and medieval and Renaissance theories of mnemonics, as Yates shows in her groundbreaking 1966 publication *The Art of Memory*. Chedgzoy observes that works of chorography, “a mode of writing the past which inscribes the way that landscape remembers history,” can be seen in England as early as 1586 with the publication of William Camden’s *Britannia*.¹⁴⁰ And Scott in his *Border Antiquities of England and Scotland, Comprising Specimens of Architecture and Sculpture, and Other Vestiges of Former Ages* (1814–17) makes reference to William Gray’s 1649 publication *Chorographia: Or a Survey of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne*, which had been accounted for in an 1814 report by the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries. While literary and philosophical connections between the land and the mind are ancient, the inauguration of the Industrial Revolution, which challenged the integrity of familiar landscapes through disruption and destruction, forced the issue of preserving the past to the forefront for many men and women. The cultural debates regarding restoration, renovation, and preservation, for instance, became important markers for the intersection of politics, memory, and the

¹³⁹ Kate Chedgzoy, *Women’s Writing in the British Atlantic World: Memory, Place, and History, 1550–1700* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007), p. 10.

¹⁴⁰ Chedgzoy, pp. 10–11.

material world. John Ruskin (1819–1900) was a prominent voice in this debate, but earlier, literary iterations can be seen in Scott’s *Waverley Novels* and nonfiction as well. Both *Waverley* and *Border Antiquities* treat the landscape and built environment as capable of evoking and shaping an individual’s conception of his or her surroundings invested in emotion, memory, and historical consciousness.

In *Border Antiquities*, Scott articulates a powerful conception of “borderland” that resonates with postmodern studies on liminal or frontier spaces today. He notes, for instance, that the borderland is a region of shifting allegiances, fluid identities, and contestatory histories often marked (and marred) by violence. The land and its structures reflect this as well, making the study and preservation of the past difficult so long as the land remains a battleground setting.

The frontier regions of most great kingdoms, while they retain that character, are unavoidably deficient in subjects for the antiquary. The ravages to which they are exposed, and the life to which the inhabitants are condemned by circumstances, are equally unfavourable to the preservation of the monuments of antiquity. Even in military antiquities such countries, though the constant scene of war, do not usually abound. The reason is obvious. The same circumstances of alarm and risque require occupation of the same points of defence; and, as the modes of attack of fortification change, the ancient bulwarks of cities and castles are destroyed, in order to substitute newer and more approved modes of defence. The

case becomes different, however, when, losing by conquest or by union their character as a frontier, scenes once the theatre of constant battle, inroad, defence, and retaliation, have been for two hundred years converted into the abode of peace and tranquility. Numerous castles left to moulder in massive ruins; fields where the memory of ancient battles still lives among the descendants of those by whom they were fought or witnessed; the very line of demarcation, which, separating the two countries, though no longer hostile, induces the inhabitants of each to cherish their separate traditions,—unite to render these regions interesting to the topographical historian or antiquary. This is peculiarly the case on the border of Scotland and England.¹⁴¹

This passage offers an important insight into the topographical dimension of social memory and perhaps into Scott's political conservatism beyond his privileged lineage. It suggests, for instance, that memories are forged among groups whose physical location activates a sense of togetherness out of resistance. The centuries-old history of border skirmishes and violence creates among the region's inhabitants a resilient and "cherish[ed]" collectivity of interest to the historian and worthy of preservation. The inhabitants live, we are told, among "the scars of ancient wounds," among the ruins of

¹⁴¹ Scott, "Introduction," in *Border Antiquities of England and Scotland, Comprising Specimens of Architecture and Sculpture, and Other Vestiges of Former Ages, Accompanied by Descriptions* (1814–17), 2 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown; Edinburgh: Constable, 1817), 1:iii–cxxvii, iii–iv.

churches, houses, communal structures, and monuments.¹⁴² That these ruins are registered in psychic and physiological terms of wounding and scarring perhaps anticipates early conceptualizations of what we today recognize as trauma. Jill L. Matus, in her recent and compelling work on shock and memory in the Victorian period, argues that today's theories of trauma may have earlier pre-Freudian lineages rooted in nineteenth-century medical and psychological understandings of severe mental and physical shock.¹⁴³ And Roger Luckhurst locates nineteenth-century discussions of traumatic experience in the middle of the century, which emerge out of railroad accidents and other disasters characteristic of a modern, industrial world.¹⁴⁴ In *Border Antiquities*, it would appear that Scott understands that war's physical devastation of the land is merged with its psychological and emotional affects on the men and women living in a borderland. The manner in which these individuals attempt to deal with these affects is through tradition and through social memory, a practice Scott accounts for more explicitly in *Waverley*.

The land and the structures—Waverley-Honour, Tully-Veolan, Fergus's highland home, and even Edinburgh—in Scott's first novel are remarkable for the way in which

¹⁴² Scott, "Introduction," p. lxxxi.

¹⁴³ Jill L. Matus, *Shock, Memory, and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009). See also another recent publication, a collection of essays regarding trauma and the British theater that seeks to locate the discourse regarding the experience of trauma earlier than the development of clinical language used to describe it: *Staging Pain, 1580–1800: Violence and Trauma in British Theater*, eds. James Robert Allard and Matthew R. Martin (Surrey, England UK and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2009).

¹⁴⁴ Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

they invoke a sense of ownership in the past that allows for the creation of alternative histories that contest and resist official versions of the past imposed by conquering factions. The ensuing conflicts these alternative histories shape are central to the development of the novel. They also reveal the various efforts by communities to reconcile powerful emotional states within political and legal frameworks.

Not only the ruins but also the modern dwellings featured in the text are distinguished by their relationship to history and the individual and collective processes of narrativizing that history. From the beginning of the text, the young hero Waverley is led to fantasize about his family's genealogy in and as it relates to traditional (and sometimes Gothic) spaces: the library, the portrait gallery, the "moss-grown gothic monument, which retained the name of Queen's Standing," the "deep, dark, and small lake" that was once the site of the Strength of Waverley, and so on (pp. 17–18). These are spaces both of history and loss, haunted by the family ghosts that distract Waverley from his present world. Waverley-Honour is a space wherein the past so intermingles with the present as to nearly choke the future of the characters inhabiting it until Waverley leaves.

When he does leave, it is only to travel to a space, in many ways, more deeply influenced by its past than Waverley-Honour: Tully-Veolan. As the narrator explains, Tully-Veolan "had been built at a period when castles were no longer necessary, and when the Scottish architects had not yet acquired the art of designing a domestic residence" (p. 35). Tully-Veolan exists ultimately in a liminal period between the ancient

ruin and the modern house, when the legendary past becomes domesticated for fireside storytelling, and when the heroes of epics become the ghosts of the imagination. Martin Procházka reads Tully-Veolan as one of Michel Foucault's "heterotopias," arguing that the estate is "a site of contested meanings, subject to the pull of numerous discursive fields, or as a zone of contact between antagonistic landscapes, wild and agricultural . . . a zone of contact between the widely different cultures of the Highlands and the Lowlands, and later between the Scottish and the English culture."¹⁴⁵ Tully-Veolan, as the transitional space between the Scottish Lowlanders and their Highland counterparts, is also a space in which the young Waverley's heroic development is tested upon modern rather than medieval ideals and that serves as the foundation for his future romantic attachment to Rose Bradwardine. It is a space, in other words, in which the past and the present as well as the public and the private are drawn together and influence individual subjectivity.

Tully-Veolan's destruction becomes symbolic of Scottish loss and the grieving that accompanies that loss. Its restoration, though, highlights the impossibility of returning to a past that is whole. What emerges out of this process is the communal dimension of restoration—a term not without its political and historical weight in English and Scottish history at the time of the novel's setting: villagers return items looted from the estate, the Talbots seek replacement objects, and so on, all in an effort to become part of the historical process of renovation. Restoration, renovation, and most importantly,

¹⁴⁵ Martin Procházka, "The 'Neutral Ground' of History? Tully-Veolan in *Waverley* as a Zone of Contact," *Theory and Practice in English Studies* 4 (2005): 143–53, 147.

preservation are not only methodologies offering ways to cope with loss in this novel but also ideologies of representing the past. The communal efforts in repairing Tully-Veolan are significant for the ways in which they attempt to erase the narrative history of violence readers have been given by the narrator, efforts, however, presented by the Talbots as a genealogical, and thus, historical right:

“Mr Bradwardine, then, and Mrs Waverley, should see and approve of what we have done towards restoring the mansion of your fathers to its former state.”

The Baron answered with a low bow. Indeed, when he entered the court, excepting that the heavy stables, which had been burned down, were replaced by buildings of a lighter and more picturesque appearance, all seemed as much as possible restored to the state in which he had left it, when he assumed arms some months before. The pigeon-house was replenished; the fountain played with its usual activity, and not only the Bear who predominated over its bason, but all the other Bears whatsoever were replaced upon their stations, and renewed or repaired with so much care, that they bore no tokens of the violence which had so lately descended upon them. While these minutae had been so heedfully attended to, it is scarce necessary to add, that the house itself had been thoroughly repaired, as well as the gardens, with the strictest attention to maintain the original

character of both, and to remove, as far as possible, all appearance of the ravage they had sustained. (p. 334)

There is little difference, this passage suggests, between the life of the house and its inhabitants. Full restoration of Tully-Veolan, which amounts to an extraction of the memories of violence done to it—as Richard Maxwell says, “The scars of recent history are wiped away, while those of ancient history are still visible”¹⁴⁶—is represented as nearly and therapeutically equitable to the psychic healing of the Baron, Rose, and even of the larger community following the traumatic experiences of the war and those brought on by the occupying forces that destroyed much of the Bradwardine estate. The act of restoration, though, is not only a psychical but also a political and historical one.

Attempts at coping with loss through the ideologies of architectural restoration, renovation, and preservation, despite whether they are ultimately successful in this novel, reveal a profound desire individuals (and more largely, societies) have to take part in the processes of history-making. As Robert Pogue Harrison explains, “Insofar as it builds the world we dwell in, architecture actually *creates* the places where human time, in its historical and existential modes, takes place. Such places—be they homes, buildings, cities, or landscapes—are recesses of mortal time in which we go about inhabiting the earth historically rather than merely naturally. One could say that, in its world-forming capacity, architecture transforms geological time into human time, which is another way

¹⁴⁶ Richard Maxwell, *The Historical Novel in Europe, 1650–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), p. 78.

of saying it turns matter into meaning. That is why the sight of ruins is such a reflexive and in some cases unsettling experience.”¹⁴⁷ And Chedgzoy explains that landscapes and monuments “embody a contested, mobile memorial politics that traces a range of interests and agendas. History and memory are not placeless, and space is not unmarked by history. The meanings of any particular location do not inhere in its physical boundaries or characteristics, but are generated by people’s social interactions, occurring over time and in and across a set of spaces which come to be inscribed with meaning as distinctive places. Memory plays a particularly important role in this marking of place with cultural and emotional meaning. Time and space, memory and history, are interrelated rather than opposed, then. Sites of memory are always spaces of contestation, where multiple stories can be told.”¹⁴⁸ In his *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1848), Ruskin noted that the contemporary construction of architecture would be as important to future generations as to the past generations that created the built environment. In his section on one of the lamps of architecture—memory—Ruskin advocates preservation of the built environment over restoration because, he argues, restoration is achieved only upon destruction.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ Chedgzoy, p. 11.

¹⁴⁹ John Ruskin, “The Lamp of Memory,” in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988), pp. 167–87, esp. 184–87.

Neither by the public, nor by those who have the care of public monuments, is the true meaning of the word *restoration* understood. It means the most total destruction which a building can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered; a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is *impossible*, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture.¹⁵⁰

Ruskin advises, “Take proper care of your monuments, and you will not need to restore them.”¹⁵¹ Ruskin’s argument is predicated upon his belief in the value of the contributions of the dead to the lives of the living. To preserve what the dead built is to commemorate and respect those who have gone before. Even ownership of architecture still standing is attributed to them in this section: “*We have no right to touch them* [the buildings and monuments]. They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us. The dead have still their right in them: that which they labored for, the praise of achievement or the expression of religious feeling, or whatsoever else it might be which in those buildings they intended to be permanent, we have no right to obliterate.”¹⁵² Ruskin’s imperative, of

¹⁵⁰ Ruskin, p. 184.

¹⁵¹ Ruskin, p. 186.

¹⁵² Ibid.

course, depends on times of peace. An important question to ask, then, is what role restoration plays in a community following periods of violence and war. Scott had suggested in *Border Antiquities* that the wounds of war left on the physical landscapes were also a part of the community's inheritance, that ruins may function to transmit a history of resistance as well.

In *Waverley*, the restoration of Tully-Veolan symbolizes a problematic reconciliation in Scottish history and social memory. It also serves as the seat of the blossoming relationship between Waverley and Rose whose influence on the liminal space is reciprocal in its increasing domestication. And the domestic spaces of the novel, their traditions and memories, are given a renewed sense of importance. Following the execution of Fergus, for instance, Waverley turns his thoughts from the violent death of his friend to home, a shift that mirrors the turn from public record to private space:

The impression of horror with which Waverley left Carlisle, softened by degrees into melancholy, a gradation which was accelerated by the painful, yet soothing, task of writing to Rose; and, while he could not suppress his own feelings of the calamity, by endeavouring to place it in a light which might grieve her, without shocking her imagination. The picture which he drew for her benefit he gradually familiarized to his own mind, and his next letters were more cheerful, and referred to the prospects of peace and happiness which lay before them. Yet, though his first horrible sensations had sunk into melancholy, Edward

had reached his native country before he could, as usual upon former occasions, look round for enjoyment upon the face of nature.

He then, for the first time since leaving Edinburgh, began to experience that pleasure which almost all feel who return to a verdant, populous, and highly-cultivated country, from scenes of waste desolation, or of solitary and melancholy grandeur. But how were those feelings enhanced when he entered on the domain so long possessed by his fore-fathers; recognized the old oaks of Waverley Chase; thought with what delight he should introduce Rose to all his favourite haunts; beheld at length the towers of the venerable hall arise above the woods which embowered it, and finally threw himself into the arms of the venerable relations to whom he owed so much duty and affection! (p. 329)

The opening of this passage suggests that the act of writing may be an important component in the work of mourning and remembrance: writing redirects the mourner's thoughts from loss and grief "to the prospects of peace and happiness" attendant upon the space of domesticity in the novel. (Activities that aided in the process of returning the mourner to the social order were important in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theories of consolation.) Yet travelling is also important. The journey recounted here is both spatial and temporal. Travelling back to Waverley Chase is a journey through memory. Perhaps more significantly, though, is that the writing process and the journey are entwined here both with the notion of home, which often served as a significant site

for solace as well as for the alleviation of melancholia in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century consolation literature, and the blossoming romance between Waverley and Rose in the novel. The narrative has prepared readers for this development along the way. Flora MacIvor, in volume one, for instance, senses the potential relationship between Rose and Waverley when she says of Rose that “Her very soul is in home, and the discharge of all those quiet virtues of which home is the centre” (p. 111). Writing to Rose, then, achieves a two-fold objective of many nineteenth-century novels: (1) the foregrounding of the heterosexually normativizing marriage plot with its emphasis on home and (2) the development of the emotional lives of its characters, through the concerns of memory, space, and the past.

For Scott, that which can be made personal to the readers is most capable of evoking emotional identification.¹⁵³ The popularity of *Waverley* was in part due to its representation of those passions, objects, ideas, persons, and scenes most familiar to readers. When Archibald Alison argued that Scott and his successors could influence the

¹⁵³ Paul Davis, drawing on Scott, calls this the “neutral ground” of the historical novelist’s fiction, the area in which reader and writer are able to negotiate past and present; he stresses manners, language, and literary convention as three aspects of that “neutral ground.” See Davis *Histories, Romances, and Waverley Novels* (Dissertation, Univ. of California, Irvine, 1992). While Davis believes Scott’s focus on the everyday may lead to readers’ instruction or enjoyment, I also believe that his writing of the interior life, which Scott sees in many ways as familiar despite chronological and geographical distance, is significant to the development of his readers’ affective sensibility. Procházka observes that Wolfgang Iser had used Scott’s “neutral ground” to discuss the reader-writer-text relationship (p. 143). Iser notes the use of the term “neutral ground” in both *Waverley* and *Ivanhoe*. He cites, for instance, a portion of the preface to *Ivanhoe* in which Scott claims that the “neutral ground” was “the large proportion . . . of manners and sentiments which are common to us and to our ancestors” in order to argue that “It is on this ‘neutral ground’ that the links must be forged between the reader and historical reality” (p. 84).

contemporary political scene both nationally and internationally, he noted something else significant to the project of the historical novel: a coupling of history with domesticity.

The heart of the readers of novels as well as the spectators of tragedies, is at home. The images, the emotions, the loves, the hatreds, the hopes, the fears, the names, the places familiar to our youth, are those which awaken the strongest emotions of sympathy in later years. Novelty is frequently felt as agreeable; but it is so chiefly when it recalls again in other climes, or in the events of other ages, the feelings and passions of our own. We like occasionally to leave home; but when we do so, there is nothing so delightful as to be recalled to it by the touching of any of those secret chords which bind man to the place of his nativity, or the scene of his dearest associations.¹⁵⁴

What is striking here is the relationship between the historic, the domestic, and the emotional realms of individual experience. Not only are nostalgia and its nineteenth-century association with “homesickness” and recollection evoked by the potential of the historical novel but also a well-developed affective consciousness is highlighted as significant in relation to historical consciousness. Political sympathy and affective sensibility can and should be intricately involved in the development of self-culture, and it would seem that the home—of both characters and readers—was one potential site for

¹⁵⁴ Alison, “The Historical Romance,” p. 349.

this development. *Waverley*, in fact, marks an important turning point not only in the history of the novel in general and the historical novel in particular (that is, by inaugurating it into the nineteenth century) but also in the history of the novel of domesticity. As such, *Waverley* is an early example of a historical novel that focuses on the private, emotional lives of its characters as they relate to historical events, space, and time. This is seen not only in the care with which Tully-Veolan is seen to have been restored but also in the concern for affective awakenings among the characters and perhaps even of the readers.

In *Waverley*, the affective turn is represented by the novel's preoccupations with loss, mourning, and the political manipulation of memory and emotion brought about by the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. The novel highlights early instances of the kind of communal wounding and coping mechanisms that would, later in the nineteenth century, be characterized as a traumatic experience.¹⁵⁵ Colonel Talbot makes explicit the connections between private emotional outpourings such as mourning and official action taken to stem that outpouring. He recognizes, in other words, that the emotional well-being of a group of individuals is of national concern, and the execution of Fergus MacIvor becomes a potent political symbol for the redress of the group's grievances. "Justice," explains Talbot to Edward Waverley, "which demanded some penalty of those who had wrapped the whole nation in fear and in mourning, could not have selected a fitter victim" (p. 318). The warrior's declaration about why Fergus MacIvor must be

¹⁵⁵ See Matus; and Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press, 2008).

executed commingles justice and penalty with fear (or terror) and mourning. It is a significant sentiment not only in the English campaign to end the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 but also to the project of Scott's historical novel. The idea that just as much rests on the experience of mourning as on the nearly sublime (at least for the author's era) experience of fear is crucial to the colonel's understanding of civic stability as well as to Scott's ideas about writing historical fiction—though their conclusions are different.

The hero's growth in this novel is dependent upon affective maturity, upon his ability to understand the role of emotional self-cultivation (to use a particularly favorite eighteenth- and nineteenth-century term) during events of historical importance. Indeed, both Waverley and the reader are expected to benefit from interaction with the emotional lives of others, and this moment in the text is figured as pedagogical on two counts. First, Waverley is being instructed on the devastating potential of nostalgia's possible entwinement with revenge. The empty promise of a return to the golden age of Scottish history and its restorative potentials has been dismissed by the novel's triumphant characters as a naïve yet threatening desire on the part of many of the characters. This is not the same as suggesting that Scottish rights are not important to many of those characters but rather that the past cannot be mourned with the same presentist dimensions of mourning the loss of a loved one. This is the argument put forward by Colonel Talbot: the nostalgia for a past never experienced by the contemporary instigators of the violence is not equitable to the lived experience of mourning brought about by the Rebellion. For Talbot, executing MacIvor is an act of justice because the actions of the Highland chief

led to that lived experience. The colonel resituates grief's equally legitimate, political and lexical companion—grievance—away from the personal actions and ambitions of MacIvor to their communal consequences: “‘I repeat it,’ said the Colonel, ‘though heaven knows with a heart distressed for him as an individual, that this young gentleman has studied and fully understood the desperate game which he has played. He threw for life or death, a coronet or a coffin; and he cannot now be permitted, with justice to the country, to draw stakes, because the dice have gone against him’” (pp. 318–19). Talbot argues that the individual will must be subordinated to the national project of union. Justice, perhaps unexpectedly, is weighted with consideration for the emotional lives of the victims of the Rebellion.

Second, the reader is being instructed on how to read the sentiments of past actors, for the authority of personal and communal grievance and its role in initiating violence holds a complicated place in the novel. Scott's narrator emphatically hopes that Talbot's vision of exemplary justice—in the case of MacIvor, justice without mercy—has changed: “Such was the reasoning of these times,” writes the narrator, “held even by brave and humane men towards a vanquished enemy. Let us devoutly hope, that, in this respect at least, we shall never see the scenes, or hold the sentiments, that were general in Britain Sixty Years since” (p. 319). However, decades after the novel's publication, Colonel Talbot's sentiments were still in circulation. Scottish philosopher Alexander Bain (1818–1903) writes in 1869, “Every member of the community must witness daily the degraded condition of the viciously disposed, and the prosperity following on respect

for the law.”¹⁵⁶ James Fitzjames Stephen (1829–94) argues in his *History of the Criminal Law of England* (1883) that “In cases which outrage the moral feelings of the community to a great degree, the feelings of indignation and desire for revenge which is excited in the minds of decent people is, I think, deserving of legitimate satisfaction.”¹⁵⁷

Christopher Herbert identifies these sentiments as part of a “culture of retribution” that informed sociopolitical approaches to and aesthetic treatments of instances of crime and violence in the nineteenth century.¹⁵⁸ Albert Camus in his “Reflections on the Guillotine,” arguing against capital punishment in post-World War II France, notes that the desire for revenge, retribution, and retaliation functions outside the realm of social organization altogether: “A punishment that penalizes without forestalling is indeed called a revenge. It is a quasi-arithmetical reply made by society to whoever breaks its primordial law. That reply is as old as man; it is called the law of retaliation. Whoever has done me a harm must suffer harm; whoever has put out my eye must lose an eye; and whoever has killed must die. This is an emotion, and a particularly violent one, not a principle. Retaliation is related to nature and instinct, not to law.”¹⁵⁹ What we have in

¹⁵⁶ Alexander Bain, *Moral Science: A Compendium of Ethics* (New York: Appleton, 1869), p. 44.

¹⁵⁷ James Fitzjames Stephen, *History of the Criminal Law of England*, 3 vols. (New York: Franklin, 1883), 1:478. Also qtd. in Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press, 2008), p. 119.

¹⁵⁸ See Herbert, esp. chap. 3, “The Culture of Retribution: Capital Punishment, *Maurice Dering*, *Flotsam*,” pp. 99–133.

¹⁵⁹ Albert Camus, “Reflections on the Guillotine,” in *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*, trans. Justin O’Brien (New York: Vintage, 1995), pp. 175–234, 197–98.

Waverley, then, is the acknowledgment of emotion as a particular driver for action, whether positive or negative.

In both Scott's fictional tale and Stephen's historical account, the emotional life of *the community* is given a prominent place in the application of legal redress. In other words, a connection between stability and affect at the national, local, and individual levels is identifiable in the works of nineteenth-century theorists, historians, fiction writers, and commentators. For the writers of historical fiction, this connection is often set in the foreground of their narratives, revealing an important nexus of issues concerned with kinship configurations in the projects of nationalism, domesticity, and historiography these writers represent.

The three examples above—the Scott Monument; the stereographic possibilities of education and identification; and *Waverley*—reveal the pleasures and lessons of historical juxtaposition. The analysis of comparative, historical reference points operates within a communicative methodology that makes the past accessible and memorable. In all three instances, the relationship between the past and present is obvious but equally important is the relationship between the object or text and the viewer or reader. How the past is represented to an audience was an important question for the nineteenth-century historical novelist.

The divide between the historical record and fiction, which made possible a fuller exploration of affect for the fiction writer, was for many writers insufficiently negotiated

in Scott's opinion. After reading Ainsworth's *Sir John Chiverton* (1826) and Horace Smith's (1779–1849) *Brambletye House; or, Cavaliers and Roundheads* (1826), for instance, Scott wrote in his journal that the authors "have to read old books and consult antiquarian collections to get their information," which "leads to a dragging in of historical details by head and shoulders, so that the interest of the main piece is lost in minute descriptions of events which do not affect its progress."¹⁶⁰ Scott, on the other hand, "long since hav[ing] read such works and possess[ing] thanks to a strong memory the information which they have to seek for," says he has "repented" of this practice, claiming instead that "in my better efforts while I conducted my story through the agency of historical personages and by connecting it with historical incidents I have endeavoured to weave them pretty closely together and in future I will study this more—Must not let the background eclipse the principal figures—the frame overpower the picture."¹⁶¹ Scott was, in fact, as he made clear both in *Waverley* and his later journal, aware of his uniquely innovative position as an author of a new type of fiction. In both the first and final chapters of *Waverley*, Scott articulates his vision for this new "branch" of fiction as one in which historical consciousness is made significant by a focus on the emotional lives of his subjects (p. 4).

¹⁶⁰ Scott, London, Wednesday, 18 October 1826, in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. W. E. K. Anderson (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1998), pp. 244–47, 245.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

In his introductory chapter, Scott situates his narrative within a space of rupture, a break from other traditions in order to show how those traditions have shaped reader experiences. The choice of epigraph and the conscientious, though tongue-in-cheek, decision-making discussion of his choice of title and subtitle signal this break. Taken from Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, part ii, the epigraph forces a crisis of allegiance: "Under which King, Bezonian? speak, or die!" Most obviously, this forecasts the subject matter of the novel, but it may also be fruitful to read it as a comment on the writer's craft because there are certain risks involved in diverging from the conventions of popular literature. For Scott, though, these risks are well worth taking. His narrated considerations on his choice of title and subtitle are evaluative of that fiction. He suggests that writers have come to use "English history and topography" as a crutch for their works.

The title of this work has not been chosen without the grave and solid deliberation which matters of importance demand from the prudent. Even its first, or general denomination, was the result of no common research or selection, although, according to the example of my predecessors, I had only to seize upon the most sounding and euphonic surname that English history or topography affords, and elect it at once as the title of my work, and the name of my hero. But, alas! what could my readers have expected from the chivalrous epithets of Howard, Mordaunt, Mortimer, or Stanley, or from the softer and more sentimental sounds

of Belmour, Belville, Belfied and Belgrave, but pages of inanity, similar to those which have been so christened for half a century past? (p. 3)

Scott's indictment of his fellow artists is complicated by a profession of timidity: "I must modestly admit I am too diffident of my own merit to place it in unnecessary opposition to preconceived associations" (p. 3). Yet, what he effects is a suspension of familiar tradition, the success of which relies on the readers' goodwill: "I have therefore, like a maiden knight with his white shield, assumed for my hero, WAVERLEY, an uncontaminated name, bearing with its sound little of good or evil, excepting what the reader shall be hereafter pleased to affix to it" (p. 3). Despite his self-proclaimed modesty and diffidence, Scott's choice of the hero's and novel's name boldly registers his challenge to his predecessors on the defining categories of nationhood: history, genealogy, topography, language, and culture.

Scott's satirical deliberations regarding his title and subtitle react to what he identifies as the "different branches of his art," the enormously popular novelistic modes of the mid to late eighteenth century and first decades of the nineteenth century: the Gothic narrative, the romance, the sentimental tale, and the novel of contemporary manners (pp. 3–4).

By fixing then the date of my story Sixty Years before this present 1st November, 1805, I would have my readers understand that they will meet in the following

pages neither a romance of chivalry, nor a tale of modern manners; that my hero will neither have iron on his shoulders, as of yore, nor on the heels of his boots, as is the present fashion of Bond Street; and that my damsels will neither be clothed “in purple and in pall,” like the Lady Alice of an old ballad, nor reduced to the primitive nakedness of a modern fashionable at a rout. From this my choice of an era the understanding critic may farther presage, that the object of my tale is more a description of men than manners. (p. 4)

This is not to suggest that Scott’s novel will not (for it does) contain certain elements of these various modes—particularly those of the novel of manners¹⁶²—but he explains that his focus instead will be on the interior, emotional life of his characters, on “those passions common to men in all stages of society, and which have alike agitated the human heart, whether it throbbed under the steel corslet of the fifteenth century, the brocaded coat of the eighteenth, or the blue frock and white dimity waistcoat of the present day” (p. 5). His story of the passions is taken “from the great book of Nature, the same through a thousand editions, whether of black letter or wire-wove and hot-pressed” (p. 5). Scott’s purpose in focusing on this aspect of the historical record is, as I have argued, pedagogical: “Some favourable opportunities of contrast have been afforded me,

¹⁶² As Davis explains, “focusing on manners allows Scott to shift political conflicts from the public to the private sphere” (p. 91); he argues further that “By shifting history into fiction, the Author of the Waverley Novels gives concrete form to the history of manners upon which late-eighteenth-century ‘philosophical’ historians were beginning to insist” (p. 138). I want to focus on how this shift actually takes place in the emerging intersections between theories of historiography and theories of psychology or sociology. For Davis, character development is measured through sexual socialization influenced by the turn away from romance reading.

by the state of society in the northern part of the island at the period of my history, and may serve at once to vary and to illustrate the moral lessons which I would willingly consider as the most important part of my plan” (p. 5). Scott is aware, though, that his “moral lessons” will fail if he “shall be found unable to mix them with amusement,—a task not quite so easy in this critical generation as it was ‘Sixty Years since’” (p. 5).¹⁶³ As Iser has argued, “Bringing the past to life requires the presence of the main character, for he—the passive hero—represents the thoughts and feelings of the contemporary reader; in this way, historical reality is transformed for the reader to experience for himself [sic].”¹⁶⁴ The past is brought to life through affective identification with the young hero and his ability to negotiate or mediate, to use Iser’s term, the relationship between the past and the present.¹⁶⁵

In his final chapter, “A Postscript, which should have been a Preface,” Scott repeats his desire to combine history with instruction and furthers his vision of combining memory with preservation and both with pleasure.¹⁶⁶ He writes the novel “for the

¹⁶³ Ibid. On the role of “amusement” and play in Scott, see Davis, pp. 4–6.

¹⁶⁴ Iser, p. 86.

¹⁶⁵ Iser, p. 84. Significantly, recent studies of the cultural and social dimensions of memory have argued that the past is mediated through cultural forms. See, for instance, the collection *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, eds. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, in collaboration with Laura Basu and Paulus Bijl (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), in which the authors take the term “mediation” quite literally, arguing that memory is shaped and constructed by various media—music, photographs, souvenirs, films, and novels, for example.

¹⁶⁶ For further information on the importance of instruction and the controversy over “entertainment” in history writing from the mid to late eighteenth century, particularly during the Scottish Enlightenment, see Davis, chapter 1, esp. pp. 18–33. Iser argues that preservation is achieved through the use of multiple eye-witnesses who reveal a common experience of the past in the present. He argues that “The minor

purpose of preserving some idea of the ancient manners of which I have witnessed the almost total extinction” and goes on to explain that “I would willingly persuade myself that the preceding work will not be found altogether uninteresting. To elder persons it will recall scenes and characters familiar to their youth; and to the rising generation the tale may present some idea of the manners of their forefathers” (pp. 340–41). Scott was keen not to overwhelm his readers with historical detail; he believed, that is, in a distinction between writing a history and writing a historical novel. The key to this, I believe, was his focus on affective development.

Waverley, very early in the nineteenth century, takes up a number of key concerns for the historical novel that continued to develop over the course of the century: the role of loss, trauma, and the politicization of grief and memory in historiography and historical fiction writing and its often subsequent but problematic invitation to mourn the loss of idealized individuals and the pasts written about them—ultimately, to mourn the loss of the ideologies of heroism—and thus the very “stuff” of so much of the century’s fiction; the introduction of various metaphors of memory as reliably available components in modernity’s campaign against historical dissolution; and the establishment of the historical novel’s vexed relationship to domesticity, in which the home often functions as a memory space.¹⁶⁷ Scott introduces, in other words, a theory about how memory and history can be reconciled in the productive space of genre.

characters in the novel ensure that historical ways of life are continually communicated to the present, and thus a reality is saved that would otherwise have perished with the passing of time” (p. 89).

¹⁶⁷ On the importance of home to memory, see Chedgzoy, chap. 1.

For Scott, stories of the past should be both informative and entertaining. They should also reflect a concerted effort to bring together the public and private lives of individuals, which takes into account the importance of an emotional influence on action. Passages from two other early nineteenth century writers further illustrate this. In Jane Austen's (1775–1817) *Northanger Abbey* (1818), Catherine Morland famously declares that "History, real solemn history, I cannot be interested in": "I read it a little as a duty, but it tells me nothing that does not either vex or weary me. The quarrels of popes and kings, with wars or pestilences, in every page; the men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all. It is very tiresome: and yet I often think it odd that it should be so dull, for a great deal of it must be invention. The speeches that are put into the heroes' mouths, their thoughts and designs the chief of all this must be invention, and invention is what delights me in other books."¹⁶⁸ And Thomas Arnold (1795–1842) lamented "*That the Statute Book has not been more habitually referred to by writers on English history, has always seemed to me matter of surprise . . . Everything of the nature of law has a peculiar interest and value, because it is the expression of the deliberate mind of the supreme government of society*"; and as history, as commonly written, records so much of the passionate and unreflecting part of human nature, we are bound in fairness to acquaint ourselves with its calmer and better part also."¹⁶⁹ These two passages, the first an often-

¹⁶⁸ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1818), ed. Marilyn Butler (New York and London: Penguin, 1995), p. 97.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas Arnold, *Introductory Lectures on Modern History* (1842), 5th edn. (London: T. Fellowes, 1860), p. 124. Emphasis in the original.

cited declaration by Austen's fictional heroine and the second from a prominent English historian and educator, when read together, reveal an assumption made about history in nineteenth-century Britain: the popularity of history was directly tied to its examination of the emotional life—"the passionate and unreflecting part of human nature," according to Arnold—of its subjects. Despite increasing disciplinary pressure placed on nineteenth-century historians to use empirical methodologies and official documents of the type to which Arnold refers, authors of historical fiction often sought an approach to understanding and explaining the past that balanced empirical with affective ways of knowing about it.¹⁷⁰ Examining how the politics of one of the most powerful of nineteenth-century passions—grief—and its legal and etymological companion—grievance—come to bear upon historical fiction is key to understanding this approach. What the later nineteenth century would consider trauma induced by violent crises often becomes central to the nineteenth-century British historical novel as the private, emotional life is placed next to the public life of the community.

The cultivation of sympathy is, of course, one of the more widely recognized aims of many nineteenth-century writers by modern scholars, but the relationship between history-writing and other emotions, particularly those closely connected to memory—such as grief—is less talked about by contemporary scholars of the nineteenth century despite the importance of social memory's core affects to men and women of the period.

¹⁷⁰ For a recounting of the debate regarding historical sources and the increasing disciplinary divide between historians and historical fiction writers, see Stephen Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History*, Twayne Studies in Intellectual and Cultural History Series, ser. ed. Michael Roth (New York: Twayne; Oxford and New York: Maxwell Macmillan, 1995), esp. pp. 3–44.

In fact, writers of historical fiction often foreground moments of grief and mourning and their relationship to the construction of memory in their texts as key instances in actualizing history's pedagogical possibility. As Audrey Jaffe has argued, "Victorian novels . . . helped formulate the ideological meanings borne by emotional response."¹⁷¹ And fiction was often viewed in the nineteenth century as an instrument for the affective development of British readers.

In his 1840 review "The Historical Romance," for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Review*, Alison explains that the historical romance is one of the most important modern art forms because of its role in heightening affective sensibility: "Considered in its highest aspect, no art ever was attempted by man more elevated and ennobling than the historical romance."¹⁷² Calling historical romances "the ballads of a civilized and enlightened age," Alison draws attention to the ideological work of art in invoking consciousness through pathos.¹⁷³ Indeed, "the main object of the art is to awaken generous and elevated feelings," according to him.¹⁷⁴ He points explicitly to the publication of *Waverley* as the moment that "One of the most delightful and instructive species of composition was created; which unites the learning of the historian with the fancy of the poet; which discards from human annals their years of tedium, and brings

¹⁷¹ Audrey Jaffe, *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 2000), p. 14.

¹⁷² Alison, "The Historical Romance," p. 347.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Alison, "The Historical Romance," p. 351.

prominently forward their eras of interest; which teaches morality by example, and conveys information by giving pleasure; and which, combining the charms of imagination with the treasures of research, founds the ideal upon its only solid and durable basis—the real.”¹⁷⁵ By century’s end, this was still considered an accurate description of the historical novel’s aim and appeal. According to the American poet Marion Couthouy Smith, “There is one factor in the government of nations which is apparently accidental, and which, though doubtless overruled by Divine Providence, defies all the calculations of men. This factor is the working of individual passion and ambition. What any man will do under the influence of some great emotion, evil or otherwise, is not to be predicted; yet very often the whole course of events will turn upon an action prompted by such a motive. It is precisely this element which is dealt with by the historical play, poem or story: and its study brings us nearer to the truth of things than any bare transcription of events could possibly do.”¹⁷⁶ And Frank Wadleigh Chandler observed that the historical novel “professes to be a record of individual emotion in an environment of historical interest.”¹⁷⁷ The historical novelist, then, becomes responsible for elucidating the psychology of the hero, making accessible the desires and deliberations of history’s players to nineteenth-century readers in an effort to awaken this affective sensibility. In so doing, the writer makes apparent the contemporary importance

¹⁷⁵ Alison, “The Historical Romance,” p. 346.

¹⁷⁶ Marion Couthouy Smith, “The Drama and the Historical Novel as Interpreters of History,” *Official Report of the Biennial Convention* 3 (1896): 46–53, 49.

¹⁷⁷ Frank Wadleigh Chandler, “Some Theories of the Novel’s Evolution,” *East and West* 1 (1900): 268–75, 273.

of history's consequences. For this reason, Alison rather extraordinarily suggests that Scott's novels about the past are in fact responsible for quelling social tumult in the present. "It is not going too far to say," Alison writes, "that the romances of Sir Walter Scott have gone far to neutralise the dangers of the Reform Bill. Certain it is that they have materially assisted in extinguishing, at least in the educated classes of society, that prejudice against the feudal manners, and those devout aspirations on the blessings of democratic institutions, which were universal among the learned over Europe in the close of the eighteenth century."¹⁷⁸ The Reverend McVickar would write to Scott, asking if he would consider setting one of his novels in America. McVickar felt emboldened to ask this, as he said, based "upon the high ground of that moral influence writers of his talent might exert, and which, consequently, they might be said to be bound to exert, in healing the wounds of a narrow and hostile policy between great and kindred nations; that it was a victory attainable, since Miss Edgeworth had done it for Ireland, and he himself for Scotland."¹⁷⁹ Yet, as we have seen, others would in fact consider the historical novel as Stoddard did—"the epic of democracy"—and an intervention in the developmental process.

Alison, an archconservative, had an obvious and vested interest in seeing the past put into the service of contemporary conservative ideology, but his comments regarding the ability of the historical novel to be pedagogically and affectively elevating were not

¹⁷⁸ Alison, "The Historical Romance," p. 347.

¹⁷⁹ McVickar, pp. 35–36.

uncommon sentiments made about the important relationship among history, fiction, and pedagogy by other men and women at various points along the nineteenth-century political spectrum. Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95) argued that history should be included in any liberal education, “treated not as a succession of battles and dynasties; not as a series of biographies; not as evidence that Providence has always been on the side of either Whigs or Tories; but as the development of man in times in past, and in other conditions than our own.”¹⁸⁰ In his recommendation, history is effectively lent to a characteristically Victorian developmental narrative.¹⁸¹ Literature, while typically pleasurable, could also be included in a liberal education if properly supervised by “direction, and the cultivation of a refined taste by attention to sound criticism,” according to Huxley.¹⁸² It is not surprising that the scientist felt both history and literature could be edifying if duly grounded in something approaching empirical methodologies.

Tacking differently, George Eliot—in her review of Kingsley’s *Westward Ho!*—cautions the historical novelist against heavy-handed pedantry. Instead, she suggests that if Kingsley “would confine himself to his true sphere [of novel-writing], he might be a teacher in the sense in which every great artist is a teacher—namely, by giving us his

¹⁸⁰ Thomas Henry Huxley, “A Liberal Education; and Where to Find It” (1868), in *Science and Education: Essays* by Huxley (New York: D. Appleton, 1898), pp. 76–110, 109.

¹⁸¹ On historicism and causal narratives, see Chris Brooks, “Historicism and the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Study of the Past in the Victorian Age*, ed. Vanessa Brand (Oxford: Oxbow for the British Archaeological Association and The Royal Archaeological Institute, 1998), pp. 1–19.

¹⁸² Huxley, p. 109.

higher sensibility as a medium, a delicate acoustic or optical instrument, bringing home to our coarser senses, what would otherwise be unperceived by us.”¹⁸³ Thomas Carlyle argues that literature and the past are deeply entwined, “In Books lies the *soul* of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream.” He sees the power of books as nothing short of miraculous: “Do not Books still accomplish *miracles*, as *Runes* were fabled to do? They persuade men.”¹⁸⁴ And in writing specifically about the Waverley Novels, he noted that “These Historical Novels have taught all men this truth, which looks like a truism, and yet was as good as unknown to writers of history and others, till so taught: that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state-papers, controversies, and abstractions of men.”¹⁸⁵ Besant, in a 1884 lecture to the Royal Institution titled “The Art of Fiction” (the lecture to which Henry James’s essay of the same title responds), wrote that

The modern novel converts abstract ideas into living models; it gives ideas, it strengthens faith, it preaches a higher morality than is seen in the actual world; it commands the emotions of pity, admiration, and terror; it creates and keeps alive

¹⁸³ George Eliot, “Charles Kingsley’s *Westward Ho!*” in *Selected Essays, Poems, and Other Writings*, ed. A. S. Byatt (New York and London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 311–19, 312.

¹⁸⁴ Thomas Carlyle, “The Hero as Man of Letters: Johnson, Rousseau, Burns,” Lecture 5 (19 May 1840), in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841) (London: Dodo Press, nd), pp. 120–51, 124–25.

¹⁸⁵ Carlyle, “Sir Walter Scott” (1838), in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, Collected and Republished* (London: Elibron, 2005), pp. 21–80, 71–72.

the sense of sympathy; it is the universal teacher; it is the only book which the great mass of reading mankind ever do read; it is the only way in which people can learn what other men and women are like; it redeems their lives from dulness [sic], puts thoughts, desires, knowledge, and even ambitions into their hearts: it teaches them to talk, and enriches their speech with epigrams, anecdotes and illustrations. It is an unfailing source of delight to millions, happily not too critical. Why out of all the books taken down from the shelves of the public libraries, four-fifths are novels, and of all those that are bought nine-tenths are novels. Compared with this tremendous engine of popular influence, what are all the other Arts put together?¹⁸⁶

Even Vincent, who as we have seen was instrumental in detailing the social memory of a nation, believed that fiction had its role in community-building. As he writes, “It is the fashion in certain quarters to speak slightly of fiction, and to regard the large percentage it attains in library circulation as a negligible quantity so far as educational influences go. This is manifestly absurd. Good fiction is the vehicle of science, history, literature, philosophy, and ethics. It gives a background for life; it affords material for personal growth. It confers a sense of human continuity and makes for social solidarity. The very way of imitation which sets a million people reading the same novel—offensive as this is to supersensitive individuals—is of vast importance in the fusing of persons into

¹⁸⁶ Besant, p. 10.

a people.”¹⁸⁷ In his defense of fiction, Vincent anticipates the argument made by Benedict Anderson that novels have a critical role in how individuals imagine their community.¹⁸⁸

It is my argument that the relationship between reading and action is accomplished through the historical novelist’s appeal to the reader’s emotional identification with the narrative’s subject and characters. In the following chapters, I have chosen to examine historical novels coalescing around certain critical moments in history—the French Revolution, the late fifteenth century at the transitional boundary between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the exploration of the New World, and so on—in order to argue that these crises force such an emotional identification between reader and subject. As Mandell Creighton pointed out over a century ago, “it is great crises, periods of disruption, great emergencies, which as a rule impress contemporaries and furnish matter for close observation” and “The Great Rebellion and the French Revolution have furnished endless motives to dramatists, novelists, and painters, because they suggest possibilities of striking contrasts, and afford available situations. The human interest is then most intense, and our sympathies are most easily awakened.”¹⁸⁹ The crisis

¹⁸⁷ Vincent, “The Library and the Social Memory,” pp. 583–84.

¹⁸⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹⁸⁹ Mandell Creighton, “The Picturesque in History,” in *Historical Lectures and Addresses*, ed. Louise Creighton (London and New York: Longmans, Green, 1903), pp. 261–84, 75–76.

moment is one in which deep suffering becomes a topic for artistic rendering.¹⁹⁰ Grief is not left out of this formulation, for as Alison claims,

It is human grandeur or magnanimity, the throb of grief, the thrill of the pathetic, which is imprinted in indelible characters on the memory. Many of the admirable descriptions of still life in *Waverley* fade from the recollection, and strike us as new every time we read them; but no one ever forgot the last words of Fergus, when passing on the hurdle under the Scotch gate at Carlisle, ‘God save King *James!*’ None of the splendid descriptions in the choruses of Aeschylus produce the terrible impression on the mind which Sophocles has done by that inimitable trait, when, in the close of *Antigone*, he makes Eurydice, upon hearing of the suicide of her son Haemon on the body of his betrothed, leave the stage *in silence*, to follow him by a violent death to the shades below.¹⁹¹

Historical fiction is important precisely because it is capable of making its readers *feel* with those whose experiences of deep pain and suffering are represented on the page, but as this passage also reveals, that “throb of grief” is often connected to violence and even, as in the case of both literary examples cited above, the resistance of tyranny.

¹⁹⁰ See Harold Schweizer, *Suffering and the Remedy of Art* (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 1997).

¹⁹¹ Alison, “The Historical Romance,” p. 354.

In an era in which the novel flourished as a leading form of literary enterprise, it is perhaps not surprising that the affective elements, so often characteristic of elegiac poetry and the dramatic tragedy, would be translated into the novelistic mode as well. The historical romance—particularly the historical novel—then, is the site at which the politics of memory inform the sympathies of the reader in an effort to stimulate ethical understanding in regards to various social formations, such as the family, the community, and the nation. This is made possible through the novelistic exploration and representation of social memory, its spaces, symbols, and institutions as well as its events replete with violence, resistance, and affective awakening.

CHAPTER TWO:

Trauma, Recollection, and Victorian Literary Interpretations of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars

I know people who are frightened at their own memory: so awfully vivid: so mighty to make past things live again which they would give much to forget. It appears to me that the punishment of past foolishness must be eternal: unless there be a Lethe somewhere.

—A. K. H. Boyd, “Of a Wilful Memory” (1893)¹⁹²

And though you do forget much of your past, yet the successive moments of your experience are bound together by the sense of identity.

—Roden Noel, “Memory and Personal Identity” (1883)¹⁹³

The writer’s role is not without arduous duties. By definition, he cannot put himself today in the service of those who make history; he is at the service of those who suffer it.

—Albert Camus, Banquet Speech for Nobel Prize in Literature (1957)¹⁹⁴

In her review of the *Antigone*, a drama made significantly more popular after an 1850 performance of the work at Drury Lane, George Eliot (then Marian Evans) takes issue with a claim about the moral of the tragedy made by the authors of a contemporary preface to the Oxford Pocket Classics edition: “The turning point of the tragedy is not, as it is stated to be in the argument prefixed to this edition, ‘reverence for the dead and the importance of the sacred rites of burial’, but the *conflict* between these and obedience to the State. Here lies the dramatic collision: the impulse of sisterly piety which allies itself with reverence for the Gods, clashes with the duties of citizenship; two principles, both

¹⁹² A. K. H. Boyd, “Of a Wilful Memory,” *Longman’s Magazine* 21 (March 1893): 517–30, 517.

¹⁹³ Roden Noel, “Memory and Personal Identity,” *The Modern Review* 4 (April 1883): 380–87, 384.

¹⁹⁴ Albert Camus, “Banquet Speech for Nobel Prize in Literature,” *NobelPrize.org*, accessed 7 November 2010 <http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1957/camus-speech-e.html>.

having their validity, are at war with each.”¹⁹⁵ Her use of the term “dramatic collision” echoes a point made about the play by George Eliot’s partner George Henry Lewes (1817–78), who in turn locates its use in Hegel. In an 1845 article “*The Antigone and Its Critics*,” Lewes argued that the play should be read “as the exposition of character, *called into action by an ethical dilemma*” rather than the illustration of a moral apothegm alone. “Having made this distinction, we should say that the *idea* of the ‘*Antigone*’ is an ethical dilemma in which religion clashes against law. The dramatic ‘collision,’ as Hegel would call it, is that between the motives of Antigone and the motives of Creon, acting upon self-willed vehement natures . . . both parties are right, and both wrong.”¹⁹⁶ Lewes, in fact, notes something of a modern-day difference in the Victorian reader’s analysis of the play from what its ancient audience might have understood: “Because modern sympathies are wholly with Antigone, critics imagine that ancient sympathies must equally have been with her”; Lewes argues rather that “the real fascination of the play to Greek audiences” was the ethical dilemma and that their “sympathies were divided.”¹⁹⁷ In a corrective analysis, then, as George Eliot explains it, neither Antigone nor Creon can

¹⁹⁵ George Eliot, “The *Antigone* and Its Moral,” in *Selected Essays, Poems, and Other Writings*, eds. A. S. Byatt and Nicholas Warren (New York and London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 363–66, 364. On the importance of the *Antigone* to the nineteenth century, see Leila Silvana May’s *Disorderly Sisters: Sibling Relations and Sororal Resistance in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell Univ. Press; London: Associated Univ. Presses, 2001).

¹⁹⁶ George Henry Lewes, “*The Antigone and Its Critics*,” *Foreign Quarterly Review* 35 (April 1845): 56–73, 57–58.

¹⁹⁷ Lewes, p. 59.

be viewed solely in the flat mode of “blameless martyr” or “hypocritical tyrant” respectively.¹⁹⁸

In fact, their relationship is much more complicated, and there are significant lessons to be learned by nineteenth-century audiences. As she writes,

Is it not rather that the struggle between Antigone and Creon represents that struggle between elemental tendencies and established laws by which the outer life of man is gradually and painfully being brought into harmony with his inward needs? Until this harmony is perfected, we shall never be able to attain a great right without also doing a wrong. Reformers, martyrs, revolutionaries, are never fighting against evil only; they are also placing themselves in opposition to a good—to a valid principle which cannot be infringed without harm. Resist the payment of ship-money, you bring on civil war; preach against false doctrines, you disturb feeble minds and send them adrift on a sea of doubt; make a new road, and you annihilate vested interests; cultivate a new region of the earth, and you exterminate a race of men. Wherever the strength of a man’s intellect, or moral sense, or affection brings him into opposition with the rules which society has sanctioned, *there* is the renewed conflict between Antigone and Creon; such a

¹⁹⁸ George Eliot, p. 366.

man must not only dare to be right, he must also dare to be wrong—to shake faith, to wound friendship, perhaps, to hem in his own powers.¹⁹⁹

She suggests that “Perhaps the best moral we can draw is that to which the Chorus points—that our protest for the right should be seasoned with moderation and reverence.”²⁰⁰ The concerns with duty and social responsibility that have so long been associated with George Eliot’s novels are central in her interpretation of the *Antigone*’s moral. She claims that the inner life (“impulse[s],” “elemental tendencies,” “inward needs,” and so on) and the “outer life” (“duties of citizenship,” “established laws,” and so forth) must be brought together, perhaps even painfully so—the balance between the two being developed incrementally—in order for justice to be achieved. This chapter will examine the “*there*” of the above passage in George Eliot: the place of “renewed conflict between Antigone and Creon,” a space of contest wherein the rights and desires of the individual are placed in contrast to the order of society. In it, I will take as my cue what George Eliot identifies as the “strength” of an individual’s “affection” in order to argue that the emotional life can effect great social change and indeed was often placed in the forefront of many historical novels. In addition, I will argue that it is in the debates regarding memory that this contest was taking place.

The ideas expressed by George Eliot regarding the *Antigone* found their aesthetic echoes in a number of mid-Victorian historical novels set in the period of the French

¹⁹⁹ George Eliot, pp. 365–66.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. These novels are often invested in answering questions of duty, individual and social rights and obligations, the point at which governmental power becomes tyrannous, and the right of the people to oppose that tyranny. Resistance and revolution are key movements that offer the authors of these novels an opportunity to detail private and public responses to individual and communal loss and trauma for the affective instruction of their readers. The relationship among affect, memory, and history is represented in the historical novels of the nineteenth century as highly political and integral to the formation not only of social units—the community and the nation, for instance—but also of individual historical and affective consciousness. Yet, paradoxically, the emotional and psychic aftereffects of trauma and loss that give way to the work of memory in these texts are deeply implicated in the violence that is often necessary in building and destroying those social bonds.²⁰¹ Social memory can be analyzed as an outgrowth of this paradox.

In what follows, I look closely at historical novels that address the ways in which trauma and loss as well as the politics of memory and its manipulation come to bear on social configurations set during the period of 1790–1815. In my readings of Anthony Trollope's *La Vendée* (1850), Charles Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* (1859), and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), for instance, I argue that these narratives anticipate or

²⁰¹ In exploring this relationship among grief and mourning, violence, and history, I draw on the theoretical assertions Judith Butler makes in her collection of essays written after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City about how mourning can lead both to the construction and destruction of a community. See Butler, *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004) and its companion work, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2009).

are altered by various acts of “official” or authorized violence that so jar upon the characters’ psychologies that the protagonists are forced to reconsider their social and emotional positions vis-à-vis the family, the nation, and history. These authors ultimately detail a phenomenon at work in their novels: the construction of kinships built around the experience of trauma, the consolation of collectively held memories of that experience, and the power of trauma and social memory to bring about resistance. The historical novelists then examine this phenomenon by asking to what degree resistance should be subordinated to the social order. In other words, the authors seek to understand whether individual or communal trauma may lead to justifiable action against governing bodies or those who have seized power and whether, more specifically, the affective experience can and should be privileged over civic duty. In many instances, these authors also represent the governing bodies’ awareness of this operation at work and the ways in which those seeking to counter resistance invoke officially approved versions of the past against the alternative narratives of trauma and memory significant to the group.

This chapter, then, in investigating this phenomenon will make the following claims. First, the moment of loss provokes the awakening of affective consciousness and, arising from this, affords individual characters an opportunity to reevaluate their social positions. Second, affect is considered transmittable—that is, grief forges kinships constituted differently than by conventional markers of identity or lived experiences. Third, social memory emerges from these newer kinships as a response to violence and oppression that seeks to give meaning to the traumatic events of history. In so doing,

each of these texts puts forward an important element of social memory: the past worth remembering is the one often necessitated, constituted, and perhaps even elevated by popular resistance.²⁰²

What both Lewes and George Eliot made apparent in their reviews is not only that audiences were reading the *Antigone*, watching it staged, and discussing it perhaps with renewed interest and fervor but also that they were interpreting it in a manner that suited their contemporary political beliefs. George Eliot, for instance, challenges this in her response to the editors of a recent production of the *Antigone*, and Lewes tasks Thomas Dyers's reading of the play that appears in 1844 issue of the periodical *Classical Museum*. Lewes suggests that Dyers's view of Creon as a tyrant, rather than a disagreeable but ordained ruler governing by historical and legal precedent, was a misreading bolstered by the critic's sympathies with certain early Victorian radicalisms. This is the nature of the cultural mediation of the past. Its lessons become adaptable for contemporary audiences despite the admonitions of well-intentioned advocates for historical specificity. One historical period, in particular, which rose to prominence in nineteenth-century British works that creatively treated the past, offered its authors an opportunity to explore the affective awakening of characters often outside the bounds of traditional history.

²⁰² See James J. Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory*, New Perspectives on the Past Series, ser. ed. R. I. Moore (Oxford and Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1992).

From the novel to the canvas, the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic Wars captivated Victorian audiences, adults and children alike.²⁰³ It was, according to Matthew Arnold, “the greatest, the most animating event in history.”²⁰⁴ Despite the failings of the Revolution, Arnold claimed, “France has reaped from hers one fruit—the natural and legitimate fruit, though not precisely the grand fruit she expected: she is the country in Europe where *the people* is most alive.”²⁰⁵ For many Englishmen and women, the period represented a heyday of nationalist victories, culminating in military triumph over a centuries-long enemy, and of renewed hero-worship in the celebration of the life and death of such great leaders as Admiral, Lord Nelson. In short, this period reaffirmed for some and introduced for others the notion of a unified, if not United, kingdom. At least that is the conservative and nationalist version of the story. Many of the novels seeking to recreate this period were also interested in another, grittier side of history: the resistance to impressment into the service of the armed forces (whether the British navy as in *Sylvia's Lovers* or the French revolutionary army as in *La Vendée*) as a sign of oppressive tyranny, resistance to which was considered worthy of sympathy; counterrevolutionary tendencies; the glorification of, on the one hand, and horror at, on the other hand, the acts of and abuses by the French Revolutionaries; and the real

²⁰³ For an analysis of the French Revolution's influence on children's literature and reading practices, see Margaret R. Higonnet, “Victorian Children and the French Revolution: Views from Below,” *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 14.4 (Winter 1989): 196–200.

²⁰⁴ Matthew Arnold, “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” in *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time by Matthew Arnold and An Essay on Style by Walter Pater* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 24.

²⁰⁵ Arnold, p. 25.

challenges of war to domestic life. Their authors were equally intent on exploring to what degree memory was at work in the cultural uses of the past in the present.

Following the European Revolutions of 1848, the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars gained in aesthetic and historical significance, although the period had been increasingly the topic of scholarly research and debate. Thomas Carlyle's mammoth history *The French Revolution* had been published in 1837. In another essay on the French Revolution, he explained that

It appears to be, if not stated in words, yet tacitly felt and understood everywhere, that the event of these modern ages is the French Revolution. A huge explosion bursting through all formulas and customs; confounding into wreck and chaos the ordered arrangements of earthly life; blotting out, one may say, the very firmament and skyey loadstars,—though only for a season. Once in the fifteen hundred years such a thing was ordained to come. To those who stood present in the actual midst of that smoke and thunder, the effect might well be too violent: blinding and deafening, into confused exasperation, almost into madness. These on-lookers have played their part, were it with the printing-press or with the battle-cannon, and are departed: their work, such as it was, remaining behind them;—where the French Revolution also remains. And now, for us who have receded to the distance of some half-century, the explosion becomes a thing visible, surveyable: we see its flame and sulphur-smoke blend with the clear air

(far *under* the stars); and hear its uproar as part of the sick noise of life,—loud indeed, yet embosomed too, as all noise is, in the infinite of silence. It is an event which can be looked on; which may still be execrated, still be celebrated and psalmodied; but which it were better now to begin understanding.²⁰⁶

Archibald Alison had suggested in the mid-1840s that the turbulent period from 1789–1815 was ripe for imaginative treatment. “The time has already come,” he observes, “when the heroism of La Vendée, the tragedies of the Revolution, form the appropriate subject of French imaginative genius; and the period is not far distant when Wellington and the paladins of the late war, transported from this earthly scene by the changes of mortality, will take lasting and immortal place in the fields of romance.”²⁰⁷ The Napoleonic Empire and the Vendée, in specific, had also been the subject of social critique: In *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Karl Marx wrote disparagingly that

The Bonaparte dynasty does not represent the revolutionary, it represents the conservative farmer; it does not represent the farmer, who presses beyond his own economic conditions, his little allotment of land it represents him rather who would confirm these conditions; it does not represent the rural population, that, thanks to its own inherent energy, wishes, jointly with the cities to overthrow the

²⁰⁶ Thomas Carlyle, “Parliamentary History of the French Revolution,” in *Historical Essays* by Carlyle, ed. Chris R. Vanden Bossche (Berkeley CA and London: Univ. of California Press, 2002), pp. 219–38, 219–20.

²⁰⁷ Alison, “The Historical Romance,” p. 350.

old order, it represents, on the contrary, the rural population that, hide-bound in the old order, seeks to see itself, together with its allotments, saved and favored by the ghost of the Empire; it represents, not the intelligence, but the superstition of the farmer; not his judgment, but his bias; not his future, but his past; not his modern Cevennes but his modern Vendée.²⁰⁸

Sixty years after the event, Marx echoes the disillusionment with the direction the French Revolution was taking felt by Romantic poets such as William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. What Carlyle and Alison note in the above passages, and what Scott had suggested by titling *Waverley* as a story “’tis sixty years since,” is that with the distance of time, defining moments in history may more fully and fruitfully be understood even perhaps from unconventional perspectives.

In 1850, Trollope seized upon the period to recount the Royalist resistance to the Republicans and subsequent civil war in his *La Vendée*, a novel he based on the diaries of Madame de la Rochejaquelein. And while his effort was generally panned—one of his publishers’ employees, for instance, complained to Trollope that “your historical novel is not worth a damn”—or ignored altogether, it is important for introducing a number of key concerns for many of the authors writing about this period.²⁰⁹ The novel asks, for

²⁰⁸ Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, p. 82.

²⁰⁹ Qtd. in Rosemary Mitchell, *Picturing the Past: English History in Text and Image, 1830–1870* (Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004), p. 227. Donald Smalley notes that “Trollope’s third trial seems to have brought even less response from the critics than either of his first two. Trollope received no information regarding sales and made no inquiry” (in *Anthony Trollope: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Smalley

instance, to what an individual and a community owe allegiance; to what degree a successful revolution must be a bloody one; in what ways memory serves the purposes both of the oppressors and the oppressed, of those seeking to consolidate power, on the one hand, and to resist that attempt, on the other; and in what manner the power of narrative is harnessed for historical accounting by various social groups—aristocratic leaders, the servant class, women, soldiers, townspeople, and so on.

Trollope's novel begins in 1792, although the narrator obligingly confesses that "The history of France in 1792 has been too fully written, and too generally read to leave the novelist any excuse for describing the state of Paris at the close of the summer of that year."²¹⁰ Additionally, the narrator notes that "Nothing occurred in the provinces, subsequently called La Vendée, during the autumn or winter of 1792 of sufficient notice to claim a place in history, but during that time the feelings which afterwards occasioned the revolt in that country, were everyday becoming more ardent" (p. 10). In one instance of local resistance, for example, the townspeople refuse to attend religious services given by or to engage in commercial activities with the appointed "constitutional clergy" who replaced local priests banished by the Republic. The execution of the king fuels the animosity toward those engaged in revolutionary violence but does not quite ignite the flame of rebellion. As the narrator notes early on, when members of the landed class

[London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969], p. 558). Significantly, only two excerpted reviews of *La Vendée* appear in *The Critical Heritage*, and they are the last two. Even many of his biographies forego writing about the work altogether; and if they do, it is often only to write of its failure.

²¹⁰ Anthony Trollope, *La Vendée: An Historical Romance* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1875), p. 1. Subsequent references will be to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text.

meet to discuss the revolution, they are disturbed by the direction it has taken: “They met with throbbing hearts and blank faces; they all felt that evil days had come, that the Revolution which had been so petted and caressed by the best and fairest in France, had become a beast of prey, and that war, anarchy, and misrule were at hand” (pp. 5–6). When the Republic begins conscripting the local men to fight in its wars at home and against other European armies, the wealthy landowners and townspeople finally riot.

In March, the Commissaries of the Republic entered these provinces to collect from that district, its portion towards the levy of three hundred thousand men which had been ordered by the Convention. This was an intolerable grievance—it was not to be borne, that so many of their youths should be forcibly dragged away to fight the battles of the Republic—battles in which they would rather that the Republic should be worsted. Besides, every one would lose a relative, a friend, or a lover; the decree affected every individual in the district. The peasants declared that they would not obey the orders of the Convention—that they would not fight the battles of the Republic.

This was the commencement of the revolt. (p. 11)

Willing to risk their lives, they organize against the Republican forces because, as the text makes clear, the Republic views the relatives, friends, lovers, and so on, as little more than expendable bodies valuable only for furthering the bloodlust of those in power.

Women are not spared the threat of violence either. When General Westerman, a German exile who enlisted in the army of the French Republic, attempts to surprise a group of Vendean counterrevolutionaries, he advises his cornet, “I do not think that we shall be able to take the brigands alive. Their women, however, may receive some of our rough republican hospitality at Bressuire. You had better prepare your prettiest bow and your softest words, for this sister of de Lescure is, they say, a real beauty. She shall ride to Bressuire before you on your saddle-cloth, if you choose to load your arms with such a burden; but don’t grow too fond of her kisses, for though she were a second Venus, the guillotine must have the disposal of her” (p. 212).²¹¹ (It is to the young cornet’s credit that he is sickened by the suggested cruelty of the General.) Angered by the banishment of their spiritual leaders, stunned by the execution of their king, the threat of familial harm propels the Royalists to act. *La Vendée* recounts their triumphs and failures.

The church, the crown, the family: these three institutions are responsible for shaping not only the daily lives of the characters in the novel but also their social memory. Pierre Nora observes that these institutions were the sites that transmitted both memory and history in pre-Revolutionary France: “In the old days, there were three main sources of archives: the great families, the church, and the state.”²¹² He also argues that “the trauma of the Revolution” initiated a new historiographical moment, which allowed

²¹¹ For an important account of the influence of the Vendean uprising and subsequent repression by the Republic, see Marilyn Yalom’s *Blood Sisters: The French Revolution in Women’s Memory* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), esp. chapt. 10 “The Women of the Vendée,” pp. 191–207.

²¹² Pierre Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” in *The Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, ed. Nora, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, vol. 1: Conflicts and Divisions (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996), pp. 1–20, 9.

for broader access to knowledge about the past.²¹³ In other words, the affective experience of the Revolution invoked a revisiting of the role of the individual and the group in the social order and how the past operated upon that order. As Carlyle explained, the event was “A huge explosion bursting through all formulas and customs; confounding into wreck and chaos the ordered arrangements of earthly life.”

The post-Revolutionary period saw an increased democratizing of the past and a resituating of that past in newer spaces or institutions, those outside the family, the church, and the crown. This is what early theorists of social memory also claimed. As I noted in the introduction, for instance, George Edgar Vincent pointed to “the family, the school, the library, the press, public ceremonies, anniversaries, pageants, [and] the museum” as the institutions most responsible for shaping social memory in his early twentieth-century essay on the topic. Notably, many of these institutions—museums and archives, galleries, the periodic press—increased in popularity and significance throughout the nineteenth century as the past was increasingly seen as worth preserving and examining from perspectives other than the chronicles of very public individuals—rulers, politicians, warriors, and so on. The novel contributed to these newer versions of the past.

To the nineteenth century, history was often a record of the influence of great men. The funeral pageants, memorial celebrations, and anniversaries of leaders such as Lord Wellington and Admiral Nelson, on one side of the Atlantic, and U. S. presidents

²¹³ Nora, “General Introduction,” p. 5.

such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, on the other, for instance, are clear examples of how one version of history—the great or illustrious men tradition—came to bear upon social memory. This is the version of history investigated by Carlyle, who claimed, in his lectures on heroism and hero-worship, “Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, the patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realization and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world’s history, it may be justly considered, were the history of these.”²¹⁴ But Vincent’s observation suggests that newer institutions—institutions that are perhaps more democratic in nature—equally bear the responsibility of the collectivization of memory. The historical novel is, as scholars of social memory argue, one such institution for the preservation and transmission of social memory.

Trollope, writing *La Vendée* in the mid nineteenth century, seems to be aware of an emerging tension between the great man tradition and a kind of people’s history, or history from below, flush with examples of how affect and social memory lead to historically significant events. He suggests that a view of the great men is often myopic and that it is the historian’s even the historical novelist’s role to broaden that view. At

²¹⁴ Carlyle, “Lecture I. The Hero as Divinity. Odin. Paganism: Scandinavian Mythology” (5 May 1840), in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (London: Dodo Press, nd), pp. 1–32, 1.

the level of the narrative, for instance, Trollope's narrator asserts that "Public men are like soldiers fighting in a narrow valley: they see nothing but what is close around them, and that imperfectly, as everything is in motion. The historian is as the general, who stands elevated on the high ground, and, with telescope in hand sees plainly all the different movements of the troops. He would be an inconsiderate general, who would expect that his officers in action should have had as clear an idea of what was going on, as he himself had been able to obtain" (p. 283). The panoramic vision of the historian is broad enough to include the domestic and emotional life as well.

Trollope's characters in *La Vendée*, to be sure, are made to rely on great men—Cathelineau, the postillion of St. Florent, is one such man—but the emotional lives of the various classes are considered equally worthy of narrative delineation and reader sympathy as a motivating force for action. At one point in the novel, for instance, in the midst of a decisive battle between the Vendéans and the Republicans, the narrator directs the reader's attention to a different kind of dramatic moment: "We will now leave the warriors of La Vendée to obtain what success they can against the experienced troops of the republican army—the men so well known in many a bloody battle as the soldiers of Mayence, and will return and stay a while with the women and wounded man, who were left to all the horrors of a long day's suspense" (p. 365). It is this narrative shifting between the delineation of the public and private realms of history that characterizes many of the historical novels about this period. Such transitioning also highlights the fluidity of issues such as gender and class in the novel and their relationship to social

memory. Social and its compliment cultural memory is, as Marita Sturken explains, “a field of cultural negotiation through which different stories vie for a place in history.”²¹⁵ The historical novel, then, highlights those different stories, often opting to focus on those voices seldom heard or intentionally silenced by those in power.

Noblemen M. de Lescure and Henri Larochejaquelin, Cathelineau, the farmer Foret, and the first conscript to refuse orders, Peter Berrier, an ostler, all come to represent the class diversity of the counterrevolution following the initial skirmish at St. Florent.²¹⁶ This collection of diverse individuals coming together in a regional alliance is significant to the experience of the Vendée. According to Jean-Clément Martin, “The leaders [of the counterrevolutionaries], who were noble, could exert command only with the assent of the parish captains, who were rural men appointed by their peers, neighbors, and allies” and that “interest in these humble heroes never waned.”²¹⁷ In the first skirmish between the Royalists and Republicans, Cathelineau moves to the front of the oppositional force, standing resolute against the soldiers who have come for their conscripts—his fellow townsmen—and in their subsequent victory, a cannon, “the first great trophy of the Royalist insurrection,” is captured, which they name Marie-Jeanne (p.

²¹⁵ Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1997), p. 1.

²¹⁶ The counterrevolution is not without its class conflict, however. Peter Berrier becomes envious of the favored position of Cathelineau in the houses of the country gentry; Adolphe Denot despises the attention the gentry show Cathelineau; and Henri Larouchejaquelin, willing to praise Cathelineau for his bravery and valor, is hostile to the idea that his sister might have romantic feelings for the postillion who is outside her class.

²¹⁷ Jean-Clément Martin, “The Vendée, Region of Memory: The Blue and White,” in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, ed. Nora, trans. David P. Jordan, vol. 2: Space (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 383–408, 390.

21). Thus, two symbols—character and object—emerge at the forefront of a fictional text charting the construction of Vendean counterrevolutionary imagination founded upon a coalescing of memory among community members.

The narrative, however, remains vigilant in tempering the celebration of memory with warnings against an overreliance on it and its attendant emotions such as grief that results in thwarted action. When Charles de Lescure tells his wife he is leaving to join the counterrevolutionaries, he exhorts her not to become melancholic but rather to accept death as an inevitable end to his risk-taking: “You must teach yourself, Victorine, to look for my death, as an event certain to occur, which any day may bring forth; and when the heavy news is brought to you, bear it as a Christian woman should bear the afflictions of this world. I do not ask you not to weep for me, for that would be putting too violent a constraint upon your nature, but do not weep over much. Above all, Victorine, do not allow your sorrow to paralyse your actions. You will have to act then, not only for yourself, but for your child—for my daughter; and if you then give way to the violence of sorrow, who shall think and care for her?” (p. 54). That Victorine is identified as Christian rather than as particularly Catholic is important to the process of reader identification. British Victorian readers would recognize the novel’s representation of the power of mourning and the memorial process to lead either to great action even violence or inaction, even social withdrawal and isolation. Writers in the nineteenth century believed the period following loss to be a transformative period in which the individual (and in times of national calamity, the nation) were encouraged to rethink, reevaluate, and

possibly even revise his or her (or its) relationship not only to the dead but also, and more importantly, to the living. The period marked by mourning and the work of memory was often presented as a time in which notions of relationality and kinship were rekindled and, at times, reconfigured. Theorists note that something similar happens today although it is often less apparent to us than it would have been to the men and women of nineteenth-century Britain. Judith Butler writes, “Many people think that grief is privatizing, that it returns us to a solitary situation and is, in that sense, depoliticizing. But I think it furnishes a sense of political community of a complex order, and it does this first of all by bringing to the fore the relational ties that have implications for theorizing fundamental dependency and ethical responsibility.”²¹⁸ De Lescure’s request that his wife engage in appropriate mourning, redirecting her passion to the act of protecting her child, was conventional to many texts—fictional and nonfictional alike—that feature deathbed requests (although this is an anticipated death) and grieving loved ones.

The fear of grief’s potential for paralysis is warranted in the novel. When Cathelineau is wounded, for instance, his followers refuse to go on. “I fear before this he may have ceased to breathe,” Foret, a farmer who assists Cathelineau in the first skirmish, tells de Lescure. “I left him, gentlemen, a few leagues this side Nantes, and at his own request hurried on to tell you these sad tidings. Oh, M. de Lescure, our cause has had a heavy blow at Nantes, and yet at one time we had almost beaten them; but when the peasants saw Cathelineau fall, they would fight no longer” (p. 179). After his death, the

²¹⁸ Butler, *Precarious Life*, p. 22.

narrator records that “The death of Cathelineau had had a great effect upon the peasants: those who were with him had returned home in sorrow and despair, and this feeling was general” (p. 205).

At midpoint in the novel, whether Cathelineau should be remembered by the Republicans at all is equally significant in understanding the politics of memory at work in the text. Shocked by Vendean victories, the Committee of Public Safety announces that nothing short of destroying the entire region will remove the threat against the Republic.

After full consideration, the Committee absolutely resolved to exterminate the inhabitants of the country—utterly to destroy them all, men, women, and children—to burn every town, every village, and every house—to put an end to all life in the doomed district, and to sweep from the face of the country man, beast, and vegetable. The land was to be left without proprietors, without a population, and without produce; it was to be converted into a huge Golgotha, a burial-place for every thing that had life within it; and then, when utterly purged by fire and massacre, it was to be given up to new colonists, good children of the Republic, who should enjoy the fertility of a land soaked with the blood of its former inhabitants. Such was the deliberate resolution of the Committee of Public Safety, and no time was lost in commencing the work of destruction. (p. 190)

Today, a number of scholars regard this brutal retaliation as one of the earliest genocides in modern history, although that assessment is not without ideological detraction. Marilyn Yalom writes that “the republican army not only murdered citizens, raping the women and bayoneting the children to save gun powder, but they also slaughtered livestock, cut down trees, razed villages and towns, sent tens of thousands of people into homeless wandering. It is no wonder that the Vendean wars inspired numerous chronicles of martyrdom, and that Vendéans are overrepresented among memoirs of the Revolution.”²¹⁹ Victorians saw it as an act of terrible cruelty that further disengaged supporters of the original ideals of the revolution and enflamed a justifiable counterrevolution, as Trollope permits, for these were “all the horrors of a civil war, in which quarter was refused [the Vendéans] by their enemies, and mercy even to children was considered as a crime” (p. 227). The logic of the revolutionaries seems paradoxical: while such scorched-earth policies are often intended to erase people and places from the cartographical and historical records, the action itself was meant simultaneously to be exemplary. Thus Tuaut de La Bouverie proclaimed before the National Assembly in 1791, “It takes a terrifying spectacle to hold the people in check.”²²⁰ And in *La Vendée*, the narrator explains that “The Republic had declared, that opposition to its behests, in deed, or in word, or even in thought, as far as thoughts could be surmised, should be punished with death; and by adhering to the purport of this horrid decree, the voice of a

²¹⁹ Yalom, p.192.

²²⁰ Qtd. in Albert Camus, “Reflections on the Guillotine,” in *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*, trans. Justin O’Brien (New York: Vintage, 1995), pp. 175–234, 181.

nation returning to its senses was subdued. Men feared to rise against the incubus which oppressed them, lest others more cowardly than themselves should not join them; and the Committee of Public Safety felt that their prolonged existence depended on their being able to perpetuate this fear. It determined, therefore, to strike terror into the nation by exhibiting a fearful example in La Vendée" (p. 190). As in *Waverley*, the notion of exemplary punishment underscores a powerful acknowledgement of the relationship between memory and affect in the historical accounting of the coalescence and expression of power.

Those charged with carrying out the Committee's resolution in *La Vendée*—Barre, Santerre, Westerman, and Generals Chouardin and Bourbotte—are negatively portrayed. Barre, in particular, is presented as incapable of sympathetic imagination when it comes to the death of Cathelineau. As the five men plan their assault on the Vendéans, Santerre genuinely toasts the memory of Cathelineau. Bourbotte and Chouardin follow suit, Chouardin acknowledging the postillion's courage: "Cathelineau was a brave man . . . I am glad he died of his wounds; I should have been sorry that so gallant a fellow should have had to submit his neck to the sharp embraces of Mademoiselle Guillotine." The general's admiration is criticized by Barre: "This is hardly a patriotic sentiment, citizen General . . . Gallantry on the part of an insurgent royalist is an inspiration of the devil, sent to induce man to perpetuate the degradation and misery of his fellow-men. Such gallantry, or rather such frenzy, should give rise to anything but admiration in the breast of a patriot" (p. 194). He goes on to exclaim that

the Vendéans and their sympathizers “are mean curs . . . and like curs they must be destroyed; the earth must be rid of men who know not how to take possession of their property in that earth which nature has given them. Believe me, citizen General, that any sympathy with such a reptile as Cathelineau is not compatible with the feeling which should animate the heart of a true republican, intending honestly and zealously to do the work of the Republic” (pp. 195–96). Central to this exchange is the role of memory in nation-building. Of history’s great actors, who deserves to be admired and celebrated upon death and who is to be forgotten—even eradicated from both personal and social memory altogether—is a question of politics, a question further complicated by the revolution’s reordering of the social system. The narrator’s depiction of this scene is a tacit evaluation of revolutionary honor. John McVickar, in his “Eulogium” for Sir Walter Scott, had pondered Scott’s decision to remain anonymous for as long as he did after the success of *Waverley*. He notes that “The dread of giving offense to majesty, from the tenderness [his novels] displayed toward an exiled race, [Scott] himself rejected with scorn, as if the magnanimity of him who filled their throne, could not ‘pardon a sigh from others, or bestow one themselves to the memory of brave opponents.’”²²¹ These are the moments, then, in which not only systems of governance but also codes of conduct are reevaluated and reordered. The various demands for individual characters to denounce or profess their association either with the Republicans or Royalists confirm this.

²²¹ McVickar, “Eulogium,” p. 28.

Public—written and/or oral—declarations of allegiance represent acts of memory as well as history. When Santerre asks Marquis Larochejaquelin to denounce his son—a royalist—in order to spare his and his daughter Agatha’s life, he is, in essence, asking that the elder Marquis dissolve the familial ties that have anciently regulated the material transmission of property, the legal passing down of title, and the intergenerational sharing of kinship and collectively held memories. Father and daughter refuse. It is the latter—kinship and memory—that give them strength during a period in which property and title are already being and inevitably will be redistributed by the Republic. Threatened with abduction by her jilted lover and the traitor to the Royalists’ cause Adolphe Denot, Agatha Larochejaquelin is steeled by remembrance: “She did not scream or cry, for there was something within her—a memory of Cathelineau’s last moments, of her brother’s gallantry, and her father’s loyalty, which strongly urged her to repress her tears before a republican” (p. 235). Before giving his men the orders to destroy de Lescure’s estate after having been frustrated in his attempts at capturing its residents, Westerman submits to “Citizen President . . . the only trophies which I have deemed myself justified in rescuing from the flames which are about to consume this accursed chateau. I enclose the will and a miniature portrait of the aristocrat, de Lescure” (p. 224). The will and the miniature classically symbolize the processes by which family memory is constructed and transmitted both in the novel and in broader eighteenth- and nineteenth-century culture. The term trophy is significant: it is not only the term used to describe the capture of the Marie-Jeanne by the Vendéans but also a mark (as it is in the case of the cannon)

of victory—the successful exertion of power over one by another. The will, the miniature, and securing the oath of allegiance become exemplary of the violent attempts by the Republic to sever the ligatures of the past from the present. These attempts at erasing the past and memories of it were perhaps the most difficult work of the Republic. The desired outcome—essential and imposed amnesia—would prove an impossibility despite the wholesale destruction of the various spaces in the novel in which memory resides.

Henri Larochejaquelin removes his father and sister from Durbellire along with M. de Lescure and his wife, and Henri's fiancé Marie, after the de Lescure estate is destroyed and the threat of destruction looms for Durbellire necessitating their departure. The old Marquis is devastated, and his fear of displacement is palpably measured in visual, material, and memorial terms.

By degrees the daylight faded away, and for the last time, they watched the sun sink down among the cherry trees of Durbellire, and the Marquis, seated by the window, gazed into the West till not a streak of light was any longer visible; then he felt that the sun of this world had set for him for good and all. Even though he might live out a few more weary years, even thought the cause to which he was attached should be victorious, yet he knew that Durbellire would be destroyed, and it never could be anything to him how the sun set or rose in any other place. His warm heart yearned towards his house; the very chair on which he sat, the

stool on which rested his crippled legs, were objects of an affection which he had before felt, but never till now acknowledged. Every object on which his eye rested gave him a new pang; every article within his reach was a dear friend, whom he had long loved, and was now to leave for ever. (p. 289)

The Marquis's reverie is interrupted by his son's attempt to redirect the group's, and especially his father's, lamentations for the past with hope for the future. "After all," he asks, "what are we giving up but an old barrack? Let the rascal blues burn it; cannot we build a better Durbellire when the King shall have his own again?" (p. 289). His words are met with sadness, however, from his father. "'Ah, Henri!' said the Marquis. It was the only reproach he uttered, though the words of his son, intended as they were to excite hope, and to give comfort, had been to him most distasteful" (pp. 289–90). The father understands that rebuilding, even restoration, is an illusion of the past, an attempt to cope with violent, historical events by making manifest a period of life in which memory and space produced an identity not fragmented by trauma and loss. The only consolation in the end is that a new kind of memory could be forged out of devastation.

The region of the Vendée would become an important site of memory to France throughout the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. As Martin explains, "it was during the French Revolution, and in opposition to it, that the Vendée defined and revealed itself, following a series of wars on its soil from 1793 to 1796. It kept the image it acquired at that time, with its inhabitants preserving and transmitting memories of

battles and massacres. Established at this time were the foundations of a tradition that made the Vendée a special region, marked by those recollections and by the memory of that war.”²²² The Vendée, characterized by a flourishing of social memory and the commemorative efforts of its people that would continue well into the twentieth century but that reached “the high point . . . in the years 1800 to 1910,” constitutes what Martin calls a “region of memory.”²²³ And Yalom notes that “The carnage experienced in the Vendée remains engraved in the collective memory of the region.”²²⁴ The period of Restoration in France also saw the proliferation of monuments and the circulation of commemorative objects and memoirs of the wars in the Vendée.²²⁵ But Restoration came at a cost, as the Marquis knew.

Restoration functions in *Waverley* and *La Vendée* both politically and architecturally. While these are not unusual uses of the term, these historical novels also introduce an affective dimension to it in the development of the genre. In Dickens’s *Barnaby Rudge*, for instance, the desire for restoration is evoked by the experience of loss, whether of individual loved ones, civil rights in a modern world, or the connection to home. It speaks explicitly to the issue of grievance—for which Scott’s Talbot had

²²² Martin, p. 383.

²²³ Martin, pp. 383 and 385.

²²⁴ Yalom, p. 204.

²²⁵ Martin, pp. 383–84.

little tolerance—in the request for allegiance from a young apprentice made by Simon “Sim” Tappertit at the meeting of apprentices:

Having said it, he [the young apprentice] listened meekly to the captain [Tappertit], who, in an address prepared for such occasions, told him how that under that same Constitution (which was kept in a strong-box somewhere, but where exactly he could not find out, or he would have endeavoured to procure a copy of it), the 'prentices had, in times gone by, had frequent holidays of right, broken people's heads by scores, defied their masters, nay, even achieved some glorious murders in the streets, which privileges had gradually been wrested from them, and in all which noble aspirations they were now restrained; how the degrading checks imposed upon them were unquestionably attributable to the innovating spirit of the times, and how they united therefore to resist all change, except such change as would restore those good old English customs, by which they would stand or fall. After illustrating the wisdom of going backward, by reference to that sagacious fish, the crab, and the not unfrequent practice of the mule and donkey, he described their general objects; which were briefly vengeance on their Tyrant Masters (of whose grievous and insupportable oppression no 'prentice could entertain a moment's doubt) and the restoration, as aforesaid, of their ancient rights and holidays; for neither of which objects were

they now quite ripe, being barely twenty strong, but which they pledged themselves to pursue with fire and sword when needful.²²⁶

This passage draws attention to a number of complaints that would have been familiar to the author's midcentury audience: the desire for political redress for perceived grievances; the instatement of an imagined golden age in the past as part of that redress; and even the explication and use of violence as a legitimate method for achieving that redress. The readers, however, would have had the horrors of the Gordon Riots (the historical setting of *Barnaby Rudge*), the American Revolution (or War for Independence), the French Revolution, and even the Peterloo Massacre in their collective memories by which to judge whether violence was justified.²²⁷ This passage also highlights the process of restoration as a particularly powerful—even violent—form of political intervention that celebrates the past—"the ancient rights and holiday"—and the attendant methodologies for uncovering that past, or "illustrating the wisdom of going backward." It would appear that by the time of this novel's publication, the view of "restoration" presented in it aligns closely with Ruskin's theory regarding architectural memory—that is, any act of restoration must be preceded by an act of destruction.

²²⁶ Charles Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), ed. Clive Hurst (London and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), p. 76.

²²⁷ Thomas Jackson Rice argues that in *Barnaby Rudge*, Dickens employs "history as metaphor" in which the past is paralleled with the present conditions of England. See his dissertation, *Charles Dickens as Historical Novelist: Barnaby Rudge (1841)* (Dissertation, August 1971), p. 50.

Dickens explores restoration as a representative metaphor in the nineteenth-century discourse of loss in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Throughout the novel, restoration is a codeword for healing at the individual and communal levels. For instance, Doctor Manette's restoration refers to both his return to mental health and his return to domesticity. But the novel stops short from mentioning any discussion about the potential restoration of order, ending as it does with Sydney Carton's execution and with no cessation of bloodshed in sight. It equally eschews the political debates about continental restoration following the Napoleonic Wars. The novel does so, I believe, in order to focus on how restoration and other metaphors of loss such as recollection and resurrection become central to historical narratives of violence wherein the affective bonds of society are critical to the development of affective consciousness, bonds that are made to extend from the living to the dead and vice versa in a novel that lingers on the processes of mourning and memorialization.

The dead haunt *A Tale of Two Cities*, from the deathbed requests such as the one that drives Charles Evrémonde's actions to the vengeance plot that drives Madame Defarge who is supported in her quest to eradicate the Evrémonde family by her compatriot aptly named The Vengeance. The fictional world is guided, according to the narrator, by the hands of Fate and Death.²²⁸ And many of the characters (and classes) are described according to their relationship to the latter of these guides. Even the narrator

²²⁸ Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), ed. Richard Maxwell (New York and London: Penguin, 2003), p. 6. Subsequent references to this novel will be to this edition and parenthetically noted in the text by page number.

feels it necessary to reveal this relationship in regards to himself: “My friend is dead, my neighbour is dead, my love, the darling of my soul, is dead; it is the inexorable consolidation and perpetuation of the secret that was always in that individuality, and which I shall carry in mine to my life’s end. In any of the burial-places of this city through which I pass, is there a sleeper more inscrutable than its busy inhabitants are, in their innermost personality, to me, or than I am to them?” (p. 15). The notions that a city’s living are as unknowable as its dead and that its dead are no less important to the living community are striking. Indeed, the first book’s title “Recalled to Life” suggests, as it works to set the stage for the historical narrative, that the inhabitants, both dead and alive, are in a constant state of potential awakening—spiritual resurrection for the former and perhaps political insurrection for the latter—and that this awakening has historical significance for the chronicler. Recalled, of course, has other possible meanings in its relationship to recollect: to recall through memory or idealistic nostalgia and to re-collect or bring together thoughts, groups, and possibly even political entities that often make up social memory. Dickens’s novel of the French Revolution recounts how memory becomes central both to individual and collective identity as well as a motivating force for social action following loss and trauma.

In *A Tale*, the various metaphors of social memory—recollection, restoration, and resurrection—are invoked in order to produce emotional identification not only among characters but also among readers and on an ideological level among classes. That identification, for instance, is often produced by the retelling of how the members of the

lower classes are not allowed, in many ways, to remember their past and those who have gone before in the proscriptions against mourning, burying, or even at times marking the place of burial of their dead. When the Marquis's carriage kills one of the small children outside the Defarges' wine shop, for instance, the Marquis refuses to take responsibility for the accident even as the onlookers await this eagerly. The father's weeping, which begins when he is embraced by Defarge, signals to the reader that despite the continual suffering experienced by members of the lower classes, grief remains profoundly integral not only to their emotional lives but also to the shaping of their community. Defarge's consolation is significant in its revelation of just how much each man, woman, and child has suffered: "Be a brave man, my Gaspard! It is better for the poor little plaything to die so, than to live. It has died in a moment without pain. Could it have lived an hour as happily?" (p. 115). The question is, of course, rhetorical, and following this incident, the father's grief is speculatively registered as the beginning of the violent retribution against the oppressive French nobility and clergy, marked first by the throwing of the coin—presumably by Defarge—given by the Marquis as a perverse token of reparation and then by the murder of the Marquis. "They [the villagers] whisper at the fountain, that although condemned to death he will not be executed," explains one man to Defarge and the three Jacques: "they say that petitions have been presented in Paris, showing that he was enraged and made mad by the death of his child; they say that a petition has been presented to the King himself" (p. 176). Yet this is only one episode in which grief and the Marquis's rejection of the affective lives of the lower classes is depicted.

On the way to his large country estate just before he is murdered, the Marquis is petitioned by a woman for some small token of remembrance to mark the grave of her departed husband. "My petition is, that a morsel of stone or wood, with my husband's name, may be placed over him to show where he lies," she explains. "Otherwise, the place will be quickly forgotten, it will never be found when I am dead of the same malady, I shall be laid under some other heap of poor grass. Monseigneur, they [heaps of grass marking the dead] are so many, they increase so fast, there is so much want. Monseigneur! Monseigneur!" (p. 122). Her petition is prophetic: "My husband died of want; so many die of want; so many more will die of want" (p. 122). The Marquis's rejection of her request reveals that the only inherent rights he believes the lower classes do have exist in their return to the earth they have tilled for so many years. The denial of her petition is a denial not only of her personal memory but also of the social memory of a land marked by "heap[s] of poor grass" in danger of being forgotten.

A Tale is responsible also for furthering an important development in the historiographical treatment of mourning and the work of memory that *Waverley* had begun to outline: their criminalization. While Colonel Talbot had treated Fergus's execution as a necessary response to the national mourning suffered by the English during the Jacobite Rebellion and the Revolutionaries of Trollope's *La Vendée* attempt the violent erasure of counterrevolutionary memory, characters in *A Tale* note that mourning for opponents of the French Republic is a national crime. Both Syndey Carton and Madame Defarge make this point following Charles Evrémonde's re-incarceration.

Carton tells Jarvis Lorry that he fears for Lucie's life because the Defarges will exploit her grief after her husband's execution: "You know it is a capital crime, to mourn for, or sympathise with, a victim of the Guillotine," he says (p. 358). And Madame Defarge echoes this to her cohort of Revolutionaries as they plot the death of Lucie Manette and her daughter: "She will now be at home, awaiting the moment of his death. She will be mourning and grieving. She will be in a state of mind to impeach the justice of the Republic. She will be full of sympathy with its enemies. I will go to her" (p. 375). Taken together, these statements detail that affective loyalty to the state is just as important as ideological loyalty, and it is a remarkable moment in the representation of the relationship between mourning and violence, memory and resistance in the historical novel. For it not only underscores that sympathy can be treacherous but also that the grieving process might induce a degree of personal crisis at the level of an individual's allegiance to the national project.

Yet there is something more in Madame Defarge's bloodthirsty desire to "exterminate" the wife and daughter of Charles: her desire extends not from her true belief in retribution as an ideology of necessary cleansing for the thriving of the Republic but rather from her own sense of being wronged by the aristocratic family of which Charles is the inheritor. As the narrator explains,

. . . imbued from her childhood with a brooding sense of wrong, and an inveterate hatred of a class, opportunity had developed her into a tigress. She was absolutely without pity. If she had ever had the virtue in her, it had quite gone out of her.

It was nothing to her, that an innocent man was to die for the sins of his forefathers; she saw, not him, but them. It was nothing to her, that his wife was to be made a widow and his daughter an orphan; that was insufficient punishment, because they were her natural enemies and her prey, and as such had no right to live. To appeal to her, was made hopeless by her having no sense of pity, even for herself. (pp. 375–76).

The loss of her family at the hands of the Evrémonde brothers (Charles's father and uncle) plunges Thérèse Defarge into the kind of mourning that is repeatedly, albeit variously, represented in this novel as dangerous because the mourner's self-isolation rejects the bonds of community created by the elements of affective sensibility such as sympathy (or pity) and forgiveness. "Traumatized by the cruelties of the Evrémondes when still a child," notes Christopher Herbert, "she has become as an adult, like the revolutionary movement she personifies, a dehumanized monster whose only motive is a vengeful monomania toward aristocrats. She is not so much a fictional character endowed with sensibility and volition as a crazed automaton helpless in the grip of her fixation."²²⁹ This fixation may indeed reveal her to be driven by a dangerous craze, but

²²⁹ Herbert, p. 219. While Herbert's argument that *A Tale of Two Cities* may be read through what he identifies as the national trauma of the Indian Rebellion is insightful, I think it is also important to read it

the narrator's description of her as monstrous in her attempt to exploit the mourning of and desire to kill Lucie and her daughter emphasizes one of the messages of the novel. The right to mourn is recognized by the narrator as an indelible human right, but there are limits, the kind perhaps George Eliot referred to in her review of the *Antigone*.

Literary criticism contemporary with the novel suggests that presenting these limits was necessary on the part of the writer. In her 1855 essay "Modern Light Literature—History," for instance, Margaret Oliphant notes that there were potential moral pitfalls along the road to achieving the "height of sentimentalism."²³⁰ In writing about the French historian Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869), Oliphant argues that "Misfortune is the most extraordinary talisman in the world, in the hands of the French historian. The fiercest ruffian of the Mountain expands into sublimity and heroism whenever this touchstone is applied to him; and the tyrant whom we abhor and denounce on one page, becomes, by a rapid revolution on the next, the martyr for whose sorrows we are called upon to weep. / We lose our sense of moral right and wrong altogether over such fascinating volumes as those of the French poet, philosopher, and statesman."²³¹ The writer, then, is tasked with the job of ensuring that the reader's emotional identification with the character's suffering is restricted within the parameters of justice. Perhaps this

alongside contemporary historical novels set in the French Revolution that look at the affective role in historical depictions. To do so, reveals a discernible and broad interest in the influences of social actions on individual psyches and vice versa, which authors of historical novels viewed as culturally significant.

²³⁰ Margaret Oliphant, "Modern Light Literature—History," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 78 (480) (October 1855): 437–51, 439.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

explains why Madame Defarge is presented here as out of the bounds of human social organization—so far so that she is described in animalistic terms, a depiction also seen in Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers*, to which I will return. She has placed her grief above the national suffering of the French people that led to the overthrow of the oppressive government. Thus, according to the narrator, she violates the same precepts of national allegiance that she plans to accuse Lucie of violating upon her husband's death.

Debates about the potential conflict between the mourner and the state regarding the appropriate place of the dead in social life were both ancient and familiar to nineteenth-century audiences, as in Colonel Talbot's proclamations regarding the just execution of Fergus and with the increasing popularity of the *Antigone*. During the course of the century, these debates became more pronounced. The historical novel often takes up this conflict, but in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Madame Defarge's character fails to comprehend its lesson. Dickens's novel not only grapples with how the dead and the dying come to motivate the living against oppression and revolution but also struggles with underscoring how its characters can appropriately (or perhaps moderately) cope with loss.

The text suggests that both the right to mourn, whether individually or collectively, and the right to tend the dead body are basic to the human condition and therefore make appropriate subjects for historical narratives. In this, the historical novelist seeks to fulfill the genre's elevating potential by making these basic rights comprehensible to the novel's readers despite their separation from the subject both

geographically (English audiences reading about French lower classes) and temporally (mid-nineteenth-century audiences reading about the years preceding the French Revolution, at least seven decades before the novel's publication). Dickens's Victorian readers were well acquainted with what numerous critics have called the "cult of mourning" and what James Stevens Curl has identified as the "Victorian celebration of death."²³² Thus, I believe it would not have been surprising to Dickens's readers that the Marquis was most unsympathetic when he denied the legitimacy of both personal and social memory, when he refused, in other words, to acknowledge the grief felt by individuals of the lower classes and rejected their emotional lives, domestic affiliations, and their desires.

These men and women express a desire to take part in history, for to be remembered is understood as to be socially significant. When Sydney Carton goes to his death, he registers this sentiment as well. His sacrifice, he imagines, will be remembered by Charles Darnay and Lucie Manette: "I see that I hold a sanctuary in their hearts, and in the hearts of their descendants, generations hence. I see her, an old woman, weeping for me on the anniversary of this day. I see her and her husband, their course done, lying side by side in their last earthly bed, and I know that each was not more honoured and held sacred in the other's soul, than I was in the souls of both" (p. 390). His hopeful vision reveals just how pervasive the desire to be remembered is in this novel. And in some ways, this desire may instigate the violence recounted in the novel. Memory and

²³² James Steven Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (London: The History Press, 2001).

history are closely tied in this text about the horrors of the French Revolution, both its preconditions and its spiraling bloodlust. The historical novel functions to make this connection realizable for its contemporary readers in how it encourages sympathetic responses to individual and collective experiences of loss.

Gaskell's historical novel *Sylvia's Lovers* often speaks directly to Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* as many modern critics have noted. From their focus on the relationship between domesticity and historicity to underscoring the strains of historical events on the individual, these two novels explore the emotional lives of their characters in important ways. Gaskell's 1863 publication, though, also reflects significant influence from Scott's *Waverley* in its concern for balancing the delineation of an individual's psychology and a community's history.

Sylvia's Lovers revisits a British past that entwines two historically significant contexts: the period of the French Revolution and the era of the whaling industry that drove much of the Yorkshire coast economy in the late eighteenth century. Both pasts are equally marked by violence and loss with which the inhabitants of Monkshaven must cope. The war with France, the impressment of many of the port's young men by the English Navy to fight that war, and the perils of whaling mean that death and mourning are common in the lives of the characters of the novel. Part of Gaskell's project, in what she described as "the saddest story I ever wrote," is to highlight social memory at work in

this community isolated by its reliance on the sea through an examination of the ways in which shared traumatic experiences are confronted and given meaning.²³³

Sylvia's Lovers is a tale not only of the choices one woman makes for a lover, characteristic of so many nineteenth-century marriage plots, but also of the choices one woman and her community make in terms of remaining historically viable at a time when war and the violence of marine expeditions threaten the stability of their village. The flourishing of social memory is just one of the attempts made to mitigate this threat. Further, Sylvia's own mourning upon the execution of her father and her refusal to forget what has happened to her family and her lover over the course of the novel reveals a deep yearning on her part to be historically significant. She recognizes that the desire for revenge and the inability to forgive is problematic from a religious standpoint, but she believes that to forget the crimes done against her family means that her family will cease to matter publicly. This is a sentiment shared by many of the members of the community as they seek to remember the lives of those killed throughout the text. An acknowledgment of the twin desires—and limits—of consolation and redress indeed opens the novel with the epigraphic verse taken from Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam*: "Oh for thy voice to soothe and bless! / What hope of answer, or redress? / Behind the veil! Behind the veil!"²³⁴ These desires remind readers that there is a fine line

²³³ Andrew Sanders, *The Victorian Historical Novel, 1840–1880* (New York: St. Martin's, 1979), p. 199.

²³⁴ Elizabeth Gaskell, *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), ed. Sanders (Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), epigraph. The lines are from Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, ed. Erik Gray (New York and London: Norton, 2004), pp. 41–42, 42, LVI, lines 26–28. Subsequent references to *Sylvia's Lovers* will be to this edition and noted parenthetically in the text by page number.

between mourning and monstrosity as made evident in the actions of Dickens's Madame Defarge.

Set during the 1790s, the novel details life in Monkshaven, the fictional name for the town of Whitby, which Gaskell had visited in 1859.²³⁵ In it, Sylvia Robson is pursued by two lovers: her cousin Philip Hepburn, who works in Monkshaven's most successful shop owned by the Foster brothers, and the dashing harpooner Charley Kinraid. Drawn to Kinraid, Sylvia is repulsed by her cousin's overt attentions. She and Kinraid are betrothed before he goes to join the crew of a whaling ship, but he is abducted by the Naval press-gang before he can reach the whaler. The impressment is witnessed by Hepburn who withholds the information from Sylvia and her family. Her father encourages Sylvia not to tell her mother how far the relationship between the two young people had gone, leaving only Sylvia, her father, and the Robson's faithful servant Kester to know the details of the betrothal. Everyone else in the town but Philip assumes that Kinraid has drowned. The press-gang gains in enmity among the villagers, including Sylvia's father who leads a riot against them at the novel's midpoint. He is convicted of treason and executed. His wife lapses into melancholy and then madness before her death but not before Sylvia marries Philip out of a sense of duty to her family and in gratitude for his help following his uncle's, her father's, execution. They have a child. Hepburn's lie is exposed when Kinraid returns to Monkshaven to marry Sylvia. She turns the sailor away but refuses to live with Philip as his wife. Kinraid, unable to

²³⁵ Sanders, "Introduction," to Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863) (Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), pp. vii–xvi, vii.

convince Sylvia that her marriage was based on a fraud and that she should marry him, leaves, becomes a decorated officer in the Navy, and marries a wealthy woman. Philip, unable to gain Sylvia's forgiveness, leaves Monkshaven and is recruited by a Marine sergeant. He is burned beyond recognition in an explosion and returns to Monkshaven to die. In the minutes before his death, he and Sylvia are reconciled. The story is dark and dissatisfying for a number of modern readers because the happiness of so many in the novel is thwarted, but this greatly contributes to the novel's concern with the challenges to the individual and the community during times of violence. Its exploration of both personal and social memory expresses the characters' painful struggles to negotiate interiority, social obligation, and historical significance.

Gaskell reveals that despite the close ties between history and memory in this novel, the two are often in shifting positions in relation to one another, even occasionally at odds, as for instance, when it comes to issues of national allegiance. These moments when memory reveals its capacity for resistance, are particularly rich for understanding the impetus behind certain group formations in the text built around the characters' affective lives. A review of one moment, in particular, will help to underscore various tensions in the relationship among history, memory, and the state that becomes evident early on in this novel: the funeral of Darley, the young seaman who is killed while defying the press-gang. Dr. Wilson, the vicar of Monkshaven, is torn as he tries to compose his funeral sermon for Darley. A long passage is worth citing here to illuminate the vicar's interior wrestling.

Dr Wilson had had a very difficult part to play, and a still more difficult sermon to write, during this last week. The Darley who had been killed was the son of the vicar's gardener, and Dr Wilson's sympathies as a man had been all on the bereaved father's side. But then he had received, as the oldest magistrate in the neighbourhood, a letter from the captain of the *Aurora*, explanatory and exculpatory. Darley had been resisting the orders of an officer in his Majesty's service. What would become of due subordination and loyalty, and the interests of the service, and the chances of beating those confounded French, if such conduct as Darley's was to be encouraged? (Poor Darley! He was past all evil effects of human encouragement now!)

So the vicar mumbled hastily over a sermon on the text, "In the midst of life we are in death;" which might have done as well for a baby cut off in a convulsion-fit as for the strong man shot down with all his eager blood hot within him, by men as hot-blooded as himself. But once when the old doctor's eye caught the up-turned, straining gaze of the father Darley, seeking with all his soul to find a grain of holy comfort in the chaff of words, his conscience smote him. Had he nothing to say that should calm anger and revenge with spiritual power? no breath of the comforter to soothe repining into resignation? But again the discord between the laws of man and the laws of Christ stood before him; and he gave up the attempt to do more than he was doing, as beyond his power. Though

the hearers went away as full of anger as they had entered the church, and some with a dull feeling of disappointment as to what they had got there, yet no one felt anything but kindly towards the old vicar. (p. 67)

This passage reveals a number of very important points regarding the function of social memory in the text beginning at the moment of loss. First, mourning, as a period of grieving and memorializing, not only expresses the profound emotional responses of individuals and communities but also signals the potential for social transformation; in some cases, as the Vicar fears, that transformation may be violent. Second, the act of remembering—even the discourse of remembrance as noted in this passage—is just one node on a complicated network that draws together sympathy, politics, ethics, and kinship. Third, this passage suggests, what many nineteenth-century British historical novels also mark as socially significant: there is a type of emergent democratization not only of history but also of affect, which is revealed in the novelistic foregrounding both of individual and collective memory and of the justice those who remember often demand for the redress of past sufferings.²³⁶ And, fourth, memory is increasingly seen as a subject worthy of critical attention because of its deep cultural resonance in the process of group identity construction. In other words, memory is viewed as integral to that process because it allows the group to understand the moments of shared trauma that, in turn, lend the group meaning and may even lead it to resist or contest other groups,

²³⁶ On memory and justice, see Misztal, pp. 145–54.

particularly those groups in power. This final point is particularly important for contemporary readers of memory and trauma studies in understanding the relationship between memory and modernity.²³⁷

Darley's funeral is a defining moment in the text: it initiates the cultivation of the heroine's emotional and sexual life, works to draw community members of various classes and backgrounds together, and sets the stage for the townspeople's riot against the Naval press-gang. The latter ultimately leads to the execution of Sylvia's father, the mental collapse of her mother under the unbearable weight of her memory, and the plunging of the town into grief. Following these riots, as the narrator comments, "The town itself was, so to speak, in mourning" (p. 283). Dr. Wilson recognizes that his role presiding over Darley's funeral is meant not only to console but also to redirect the emotional response of the mourners away from their desire to avenge the sailor's death and toward the contemplation of mortality in general, a hallmark of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century consolation texts that taught resigning oneself to death was an important Christian attribute. Yet he also recognizes that he is powerless in effecting this redirection.

The funeral also underscores an important theme in the novel: affect is transmittable. This is explored early in the narrative when, for instance, upon the news of the *Resolution*'s return and the subsequent elation of the townspeople, the narrator explains, "It seemed as if everybody relied on every one else's sympathy in that hour of

²³⁷ See Misztal, chapt. 5, pp. 99–125.

great joy” (p. 17). The novel’s examination of Sylvia’s emotional identification with other characters is the fullest expression of this theme. The narrator explains that Sylvia is influenced by the emotions of those around her: “she was of that impressible nature that takes the tone of feeling from those surrounding” (p. 18). And Patsy Stoneman observes that Sylvia “demonstrates the contagion of feeling.”²³⁸ At Darley’s funeral, she is profoundly touched by the townspeople who turn out to show their support not only for the dead but also for the living whalers, such as the specksioneer—or harpooner—and soon-to-be suitor of Sylvia, Kinraid, who escaped the attempts of the press-gang. It is a sorrowful occasion, and the narrator notes that “The unwonted sternness and solemnity visible on the countenances of all whom she met awed and affected her” (p. 65). Sylvia’s emotional identification with the townspeople even draws their attention at one point:

As the service went on, ill-checked sobs rose from behind the two girls [Sylvia and her companion Molly], who were among the foremost in the crowd, and by-and-by the cry and the wail became general. Sylvia’s tears rained down her face, and her distress became so evident that it attracted the attention of many in that inner circle. Among others who noticed it, the specksioneer’s hollow eyes were caught by the sight of the innocent blooming childlike face opposite to him, and he wondered if she were a relation; yet, seeing that she bore no badge of

²³⁸ Patsy Stoneman, *Elizabeth Gaskell*, 2nd edn. (Manchester and New York: Manchester Univ. Press, 2006), p. 95.

mourning, he rather concluded that she must have been a sweetheart of the dead man. (pp. 70–71)

Her grief suggests to Kinraid that Sylvia has a place in both the familial and communal domestic social order: she is either a relative or a lover of the dead man. His conclusion that she is the latter is based on her lack of a traditional article of mourning and her overwhelming emotional response, which is significant given that almost the entire community has turned out for the funeral of Darley, and even more so considering Sylvia did not know the dead man. Sylvia's outpouring reveals a deep but immature sensitivity for others. The narrator, contrasting Hester Rose with Sylvia early in the text explains that the latter was "ready to smile or to pout, or to show her feelings in any way, with a character as underdeveloped as a child's, affectionate, wilful, naughty, tiresome, charming, anything, in fact, at present that the chances of an hour called out" (p. 24). She does not understand the nature of the townspeople's despair at the press-gang's intrusion into their lives; rather, her sympathy with those around her is almost reflexive. As she tells Philip, "I can't help it . . . When folk are glad I can't help being glad too" (p. 27). Her affective awakening is significant to the development of kinship in the novel, beginning, as it does in the opening pages of the novel, with violence and mourning.

The funeral also highlights the construction of affective kinship among various characters in the text. It is out of this kinship that social memory emerges, as the townspeople are drawn together throughout the narrative in such a way that transgresses

various lines—those of religion, class, and the family—and blurs particular boundaries—especially those of space, time, and even psychology. In other words, what results from this moment is a reconceptualization of village identity. The group is constituted by what can only be characterized as a shared traumatic experience: the constant fear that their loved ones will not return from whaling expeditions and if they do may be pressed into service by the Navy without ever seeing home or family again. As to the former fear, the narrator notes that “The whalers went out into the Greenland seas full of strong, hopeful men; but the whalers never returned as they sallied forth. On land there are deaths among two or three hundred men to be mourned over in every half-year’s pace of time. Whose bones had been left to blacken on the gray and terrible icebergs? Who lay still until the sea should give up its dead? Who were those who should come back to Monkshaven never, no, never more?” (p. 19). As to the latter, press-ganging, it is viewed as a practice so cruel that even the narrator, retelling the story sixty years later, labels it tyranny (p. 7). The twin fears of nature and nation serve as a precondition for social bonding and resistance.

In a novel wherein affect is revealed to be transmittable, anger at the press-gang is also a shared sentiment with a predictable, even justifiable in the terms of the novel, outcome. “Every one who was capable of understanding the state of feeling in Monkshaven at this time,” we are told, “must have been aware that at any moment an explosion might take place; and probably there were those who had judgment enough to be surprised that it did not take place sooner than it did” (p. 255). The nineteenth-century

reader was prepared, from the earliest pages of the text, to expect some form of seeking redress on the part of the townspeople for what is explicitly labeled as and argued to be an act of “tyranny,” capable of disrupting not only the lives of individuals and families but also communities. In the first chapter, the narrator deploys contrastive historiography to describe the practice.²³⁹

The servants of the Admiralty lay in wait for all merchantmen and traders; there were many instances of vessels returning home after long absence, and laden with rich cargo, being boarded within a day’s distance of land, and so many men pressed and carried off, that the ship, with her cargo, became unmanageable from the loss of her crew, drifted out again into the wild wide ocean, and was sometimes found in the helpless guidance of one or two infirm or ignorant sailors; sometimes such vessels were never heard of more. The men thus pressed were taken from the near grasp of parents or wives, and were often deprived of the hard earnings of years, which remained in the hands of the masters of the merchantman in which they had served, subject to all chances of honesty or dishonesty, life or death. Now all this tyranny (for I can use no other word) is marvellous to us; we cannot imagine how it is that a nation submitted to it for so long, even under any warlike enthusiasm, any panics of invasion, any amount of loyal subservience to the governing powers. When we read of the military being called in to assist the

²³⁹ See also Sanders, “Introduction,” pp. x–xi.

civil power in backing up the press-gang, of parties of soldiers patrolling the streets, and sentries with screwed bayonets placed at every door while the press-gang entered and searched each hole and corner of the dwelling; when we hear of churches being surrounded during divine service by troops, while the press-gang stood ready at the door to seize men as they came out from attending public worship, and take these instances as merely types of what was constantly going on in different forms, we do not wonder at Lord Mayors, and other civic authorities in large towns, complaining that a stop was put to business by the danger which the tradesmen and their servants incurred in leaving their houses and going into the streets, infested by press-gangs. (pp. 6–7)

Marvelous and unimaginable become key terms in this history of impressment as the narrator encourages sympathy by assigning the idiom of the fantastic to this practice, which was no longer in use after the Napoleonic Wars.

Nineteenth-century and subsequent audiences were and are meant to question a practice that disturbed the emotional, political, and even economic lives of individuals and towns. An early debate between Robson and his nephew Philip underscores the private and public stakes of impressment. Robson argues that impressment is a violation of individual liberty as well as various kinship bonds, which are unfairly submitted to the nation. When Philip responds with “laws is made for the good of the nation, not for your good or mine,” Robson replies “Nation here! nation there! I’m a man and yo’re another,

but nation's nowhere. If Measter Cholmley talked to me i' that fashion, he'd look long for another vote frae me. I can make out King George, and Measter Pitt, and yo' and me, but nation! nation, go hang!" (pp. 40–41). Robson suggests that a community built with personal bonds is equally important to the ideological notion of nationhood. Robson and the majority of his fellow villagers believe that impressment disregards this kinship and is thus unjust; "It's not fair play," Robson asserts: "It's not fair play to cotch up men as has no call for fightin' at another man's biddin', though they've no objection to fight a bit on their own account, and who are just landed, all keen after bread i'stead o' biscuit, and flesh-meat i'stead o' junk, and beds i'stead o' hammocks. (I make naught o' t' sentiment side, for I were niver gi'en up to such carnal-mindedness and poesies.) It's noane fair to cotch 'em up and put 'em in a stifling hole, all lined with metal for fear they should whittle their way out, and send 'em off to sea for years an' years to come" (p. 39).

Although Robson claims, in a conventionally masculine way, not to be able to argue the affective side of the debate, what he points to are the creature comforts of home and the domestic realm as significant to personal well-being.

The text itself takes up the affect of the press-gangs on individual and communal psyches, suggesting that social organization may also emerge from the affective realm. George Henry Lewes claimed that "Individual experiences being limited and individual spontaneity feeble, we are strengthened and enriched by assimilating the experiences of others" and "Besides the circle of sensations, appetites, and volitions directly related to his personal needs, each man has a wider circle of sentiments and ideas connecting his

personal needs with the needs of his fellow-men, and embracing past and future.”²⁴⁰ He further suggested that “Varying the dictum of Tennyson’s Ulysses—‘I am a part of all that I have met’—we may say with equal truth, though not with equal rhythm, ‘I am the product of all that I have felt.’”²⁴¹ Franklin Henry Giddings argues much the same (and indeed quotes Lewes) in his late nineteenth-century *Principles of Sociology*. “The social mind,” he explains, “is a concrete thing”:

It is more than any individual mind and dominates every individual will. Yet it exists only in individual minds, and we have no knowledge of any consciousness but that of individuals. The social consciousness, then, is nothing more than a feeling or the thought that appears at the same moment in all individuals, or that is propagated from one to another through the assembly or the community. The social mind is the phenomenon of many individual minds in interaction, so playing upon one another that they simultaneously feel the same sensation or emotion, arrive at one judgment and perhaps act in concert. It is, in short, the mental unity of many individuals or of a crowd.

²⁴⁰ Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind. Third Series: Problem the First: The Study of Psychology, Its Object, Scope, and Method* (London: Trübner, 1879), pp. 161, 165.

²⁴¹ Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind: The Study of Psychology. Third Series* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, 1880), p. 87.

. . . In its simplest form the social integration of feeling and belief is effected imitatively and sympathetically.²⁴²

For Giddings, the communal bond forged through affect “acquires continuity . . . through the development of another phase of the social mind, namely,—the social memory.”²⁴³ Sympathy, that Victorian keyword, then, is acquired and maintained by social memory. Jill L. Matus, in her analysis of emotion and psychology in Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* and *North and South* writes, “The way she [Gaskell] represents consciousness and its alterations under turbulent social and personal conditions is not an inward turn away from social representation, but an insistence on the connectedness, if not inseparability, of inner and outer worlds. Yet even as vicissitudes in both psychological and social zones buffet and shock the subject, they open up possibilities for growth.”²⁴⁴ In *Sylvia’s Lovers*, the community views itself as a group with a shared past in which the qualities of duty and fellowship cannot be redefined by a nation that commits injustice against its people. Impressment is revealed as a social trauma, and the villagers’ resistance is represented as a powerful moment in which the mechanisms by which social bonds are developed and strengthened are reevaluated.

²⁴² Franklin Henry Giddings, *Principles of Sociology: An Analysis of the Phenomenon of Association and of Social Organization* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1896), p. 134.

²⁴³ Giddings, p. 140.

²⁴⁴ Jill L. Matus, “*Mary Barton* and *North and South*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell*, ed. Matus (Cambridge UK and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007), pp. 27–45, 28.

The narrative registers the degree of oppressive fear that Naval impressment imposes on the villagers in psychological terms—the period was “full of gloomy anxiety” (p. 249); it was “as if a blight hung over the land and the people” (p. 250); the press-gang ships were “fearsome” (p. 252); there were “flows of panic,” “dread” (p. 251), and “terror” (p. 253). Villagers were obsessed with the actions of the press-gang and superstitious of their fellow villagers who might collude with the gang. The narrator notes that “there were times when the popular attention seemed totally absorbed by the dread of the press-gang; when no other subject was talked about—hardly, in fact, thought about” (p. 251). In the case of Daniel Robson, Sylvia’s father, the narrator tells the readers that before participating in the riot against the press-gang that would lead to his execution, he was “as his wife said, like one possessed. He could hardly think of anything else, though he himself was occasionally weary of the same constantly recurring idea, and would fain have banished it from his mind. He was too old a man likely to be taken by them; he had no son to become their victim; but the terror of them, which he had braved and defied in his youth, seemed to come back and take possession of him in his age; and with the terror came impatient hatred” (p. 253). His long-time servant and friend Kester worries that Robson suffers under the weight of his hatred for the press-gang: “It’s a thing as has got hold on my measter, till thou’d think him possessed. He’s speaking perpetual on it i’ such a way, that thou’d think he were itching to kill ’em a’ afore he tasted bread again. He really trembles wi’ rage and passion; an’ a’ night it’s just as bad. He starts up i’ his sleep, swearing and cursing at ’em, till I sometimes afeared

he'll mak' an end o' me by mistake" (p. 252). His sympathy for his daughter's deep grief following the actual but unconfirmed impressment of her accepted suitor is one contributing factor to this obsession, for Robson at times is unconvinced that Kinraid is dead, but his passion is reflective of that "hatred and suspicion" felt by many of the townspeople (p. 250).

Recurring thoughts, grief, anxiety, panic, and terror are often terms used to describe collectively traumatic moments as is a frequent inability to narrate those moments with conformity to linearly developed sequences.²⁴⁵ In fact, Robson's susceptibility to the "terror" of the Navy's press-gang—the passion that drives him to lead a mob in retaliation against the King's sailors—is finally inexplicable within the confines of narration. The narrator suggests that his possession might be the result of an insatiable "craving to hear the last news of the actions of the press-gang [which] drew him into Monskhaven nearly every day at this dead agriculture season of the year" (p. 253). Listlessness and isolation from others coupled with too much public-house gossip and drink are charged with contributing to Robson's "possession." The narrator surmises that it was "probably the amount of drink thus consumed weakened Robson's power over his mind, and caused the concentration of thought on one subject" and offers that "This may be a physiological explanation of what afterwards was spoken of as a supernatural

²⁴⁵ Matus, p. 43. See also her recent publication on traumatic antecedents in the nineteenth century, *Shock, Memory, and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge UK and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009). Matus and Herbert argue persuasively for an emergent, theoretical understanding of trauma in nineteenth-century British culture, literature, and science that rethinks contemporary histories of trauma studies. I am indebted to their arguments and would like to build upon them in this examination by suggesting that social memory is a result of shared traumatic experiences.

kind of possession, leading him to his doom” (p. 253). But it is clear that the narrator is uncomfortable with what amounts to a dismissal of real psychic and emotional wounding, of which Robson’s possession is symbolic of the greater community’s experience. Instead “afterwards” is exposed as a space of conjecture and speculation, of “tradition” and “form” “moulded,” as the narrator says, sometimes by “popular feeling” and sometimes by “ignorance of the real facts” (p. 502). In other words, the “afterwards” of an event is the point at which memory is susceptible to manipulation, vulnerable to normative cultural conventions. This is especially so in Sylvia’s case.

No less than three characters—Daniel Robson, his wife Bell, and daughter Sylvia—experience deep emotional states provoked by memory that warrant long-term treatment by the narrator. Daniel’s “possession”; Bell’s grief-induced dementia; and Sylvia’s long-term mourning following Kinraid’s disappearance are instances in which individual states of interiority are figured as parallel to the exterior forces of war on the community. While Mr. Robson’s obsession with the press-gang is discussed in the terms of public discourse—nationalism, patriotism, resistance, and the law—and his wife’s mental breakdown is depicted often by the narrator and other characters in the problematic adjectives of gendered psychology (read back into a late eighteenth-century setting)—fragile, feeble, and infantile—Sylvia’s emotional development is figured as a compromise between individual subjectivity and communal identification. As Eleanor Winsor Leach suggests, “In its processes of subjective transformation, memory weakens

the boundaries between self and the public world.”²⁴⁶ Sylvia’s personal transformation is conducted by the negotiation between memory and duty, a characteristic give-and-take often depicted in the nineteenth-century British historical novel, including those examined in this dissertation such as Scott’s *Waverley*, Dickens’s *Tale of Two Cities*, and George Eliot’s *Romola* (1862–63).

The women of these novels are frequently made vulnerable to the consequences of violence and war. In *Sylvia’s Lovers*, their reactions to that violence exist along a continuum of affective response to the specific threat of impressment that ranges from the extremes of violent grief to quiet resignation. At the beginning of the novel, as the press-gang attempts to take sailors just returning from a long whaling expedition, a group of men and women attempt to push back against the gang.

One of the men was addressing to his townspeople, in a high pitched voice, an exhortation which few could hear, for, pressing around this nucleus of cruel wrong, were women crying aloud, throwing up their arms in imprecation, showering down abuse as hearty and rapid as if they had been a Greek chorus. Their wild, famished eyes were strained on faces they might not kiss, their cheeks were flushed to purple with anger or else livid with impotent craving for revenge. Some of them looked scarce human; and yet an hour ago these lips, now tightly drawn back so as to show the teeth with the unconscious action of an enraged

²⁴⁶ Eleanor Winsor Leach, “Personal and Communal Memory in the Reading of Horace’s *Odes*, Books 1–3,” *Arethusa* 31.1 (1998): 43–74, 48.

wild animal, had been soft and gracious with the smile of hope; eyes, that were fiery and bloodshot now, had been loving and bright; hearts, never to recover from the sense of injustice and cruelty, had been trustful and glad only one short hour ago. (p. 29)

The narrator notes that “There were men there, too, sullen and silent, brooding on remedial revenge; but not many, the greater proportion of this class being away in the absent whalers” (p. 29). The gender disparity is significant in this novel, and it encourages identification even with the most extreme instances of the violent paroxysms of grief such as that depicted here. The narrative seeks sympathetic identification with women’s call for the redress of social wrong. The following passage provides an example of this attempt.

A woman forced her way up from the bridge. She lived some little way in the country, and had been late in hearing of the return of the whaler after her six months’ absence; and on rushing down to the quay-side, she had been told by a score of busy, sympathizing voices, that her husband was kidnapped for the service of the Government.

She had need pause in the market-place, the outlet of which was crammed up. Then she gave tongue for the first time in such a fearful shriek, you could hardly catch the words she said.

“Jamie! Jamie! will they not let you to me?”

Those were the last words Sylvia heard before her own hysterical burst of tears called every one’s attention to her. (pp. 29–30)

While Sylvia’s outburst is labeled here as “hysterical,” and her own emotional maturity is gauged as that of a child’s at this point in the novel, it is important that she experiences this first affective awakening in a setting of communal grief, in which individual experience (that of the young woman whose husband is impressed) is absorbed into and sanctified by the group. Her development continues after Darley’s funeral, when the narrator points out that “She had gone to church with the thought of the cloak-that-was-to-be uppermost in her mind, and she had come down the long church stair with life and death suddenly become real to her mind, the enduring sea and hills forming a contrasting background to the vanishing away of man” (p. 75). The abduction of her fiancé by the press-gang and the execution of her father, which follow this newer reality, force the kind of emotional maturity that must confront personal grief and familial duty.

The terms of Sylvia’s grief for Kinraid are made in reference to legend, an ancient register of collective remembrance. Before Kinraid asks her to marry him, before he leaves Monkshaven to join the crew of the whaling-vessel *Urania*, Sylvia briefly considers the possibility that her love for him might go unrequited. She takes up the plaint “He once was here,” a cry of temporal and physical absence repeated by Nancy Hartley, a young woman from Bell Robson’s childhood. Bell had told the story of

Nancy's mental breakdown, following the departure of her trifling lover, to Sylvia as a warning to be cautious of a sailor's promises. But Sylvia pities the woman in the story and incorporates Nancy's loss into her own anxieties about Kinraid's departure. "Her mother's story of crazy Nancy had taken hold of her; but not as a 'caution,' rather as a parallel case to her own. Like Nancy, and borrowing the poor girl's own words, she would say softly to herself, 'He once was here'; but all along she believed in her heart he would come back again to her, though it touched her strangely to imagine the agonies of forsaken love" (p. 189). Even after Kinraid's disappearance, her father's death, and following her marriage to Philip, the dead haunt Sylvia's imagination. We are told that Sylvia "kept her deep sorrows to herself."

She never mentioned her father's name, though he was continually present to her mind. Nor did she speak of Kinraid to human being, though, for his sake, her voice softened when, by chance, she spoke to a passing sailor; and for his sake her eyes lingered on such men longer than on others, trying to discover in them something of the old familiar gait; and partly for his dead sake, and partly because of the freedom of the outlook and the freshness of the air, she was glad occasionally to escape from the comfortable imprisonment of her "parlour," and the close streets around the market-place, and to mount the cliffs and sit on the turf, gazing abroad over the wide still expanse of the open sea; for, at that height,

even breaking waves only looked like broken lines of white foam on the blue watery plain. (pp. 349–50)

Following the birth of their daughter, Sylvia becomes seriously ill, and in a feverish moment she wonders aloud if Kinraid could still be alive. Philip, wounded, lashes out, saying “Kinraid’s dead, I tell yo’, Sylvie! And what kind of a woman are yo’ to go dreaming of another man i’ this way, and taking on so about him; when yo’re a wedded wife, with a child as yo’ve borne to another man?” (p. 354). For Sylvia, this outburst coupled with Philip’s jealousy of her deepening relationship with Hester (Philip fears that Sylvia may talk about Kinraid to Hester) and his complaint that her walks are interfering with his domestic routine overheard by Sylvia’s declining mother finally lead her to tell him that their marriage was a mistake. Soon thereafter, Kinraid returns.

The first meeting between Kinraid and Sylvia is a poignant reminder of the kinds of personal—emotional and sexual—negotiations that Sylvia undertakes throughout the novel. Accused by Kinraid of having forgotten him and their betrothal too soon after his departure, yet charged by her husband of having remembered and harbored inappropriate feelings for her former suitor too far into their marriage, Sylvia chooses to forego her own desire for Kinraid and her legal commitment to Philip, until the end when she goes to Philip in his dying moments. Their story becomes part of a complicated folk tradition that the narrator draws attention to in the final pages. At the close of the novel, for instance, when “the memory of man fades away,” we are told that “[a] few old people can

still tell you the tradition of the man who died in a cottage somewhere about this spot—died of starvation while his wife lived in hard-hearted plenty not two good stone-throws away” (p. 502). As with the speculative explanation of Daniel’s “possession,” which is given “afterwards,” tradition, form, and popular sentiment become keywords in this novel by which the past is contested. The temporality of individual memory and the nature of narrative transmission here contribute to a lack of historical specificity: location (“a cottage somewhere about this spot”) and identity—Sylvia is unnamed in this tradition—are absent.

Often times, it is the built environment that works to reflect the speculative nature of memory’s narratives. Significantly, Philip and Hester Rose are remembered by the younger members of the village. The latter establishes an alms-house in front of which “There’s a piece of stone . . . to say that ‘This building is erected in memory of P. H.’—and some folk will have it P. H. stands for t’ name o’ th’ man as was starved to death,” explains an employee of a public bath house built on top of where the cottage once stood (p. 502). The physical monument symbolizes a personal memory made social. That Hester harbors feelings for Philip throughout the text is noteworthy, for in the end, her memorial to him establishes a degree of permanent kinship the two never enjoyed.

The novel, by encouraging sympathy with the story of these characters, similarly forges bonds among readers, author, and historical material. The historical novel, then, works to fulfill the duty to remember, to remember that memory has real power in social organization and resistance. What is ultimately at stake in an investigation of nineteenth-

century fictional representations of social memory is the notion that historical novelists were involved in making explicit the politics of shaping the ways in which people remember not only their own pasts but also the pasts of their communities and their nation. While such an investigation may reveal benign forces at work in the construction of positive group identities, it also uncovers how traumatic instances such as the kidnapping and impressments of returning sailors are reshaped and used for conflict. The narrator cautions readers, though, about the role of memory and affect in the historical novel: a balance must be struck between the importance of delineating the private, emotional lives of individuals and of recounting the public, historical record of communities—the latter effort was increasingly policed within the firming boundaries of the discipline of history. Finding such a balance may lead to a richer understanding of the place of the past in the present, one that reflected the democratizing of that past.

In an 1895 preface to his own interpretation of this historical era, *The Trumpet-Major*, Thomas Hardy explains that “The present tale is founded more largely on testimony—oral and written—than any other in this series. The external incidents which direct its course are mostly an unexaggerated reproduction of the recollections of old persons well known to the author in childhood, but now long dead, who were eye-witnesses of those scenes. If wholly transcribed their recollections would have filled a volume thrice the length of ‘The Trumpet-Major.’”²⁴⁷ He goes on to recite the various

²⁴⁷ Thomas Hardy, “Preface” to *The Trumpet-Major* (1880) (LaVergne TN: Bibliobazaar, 2007), pp. 7–8, 7.

documents and accounts that evidence much of the story's veracity—an important point to make, it would seem, for the author of a historical novel.

Those who have attempted to construct a coherent narrative of past times from the fragmentary information furnished by survivors, are aware of the difficulty of ascertaining the true sequence of events indiscriminately recalled. For this purpose the newspapers of the date were indispensable. Of other documents consulted I may mention, for the satisfaction of those who love a true story, that the “Address to all Ranks and Descriptions of Englishmen” was transcribed from an original copy in a local museum; that the hieroglyphic portrait of Napoleon existed as a print down to the present day in an old woman's cottage near “Overcombe”; that the particulars of the King's doings at his favourite watering-place were augmented by details from records of the time. The drilling scene of the local militia received some additions from an account given is so grave a work as Gifford's “History of the Wars of the French Revolution” (London, 1817). But on reference to the History I find I was mistaken in supposing the account to be advanced as authentic, or to refer to rural England. However, it does in a large degree accord with the local traditions of such scenes that I have heard recounted, times without number, and the system of drill was tested by reference to the Army Regulations of 1801, and other military handbooks. Almost the whole narrative

of the supposed landing of the French in the Bay is from oral relation as aforesaid. Other proofs of the veracity of this chronicle have escaped my recollection.²⁴⁸

The preface details an approach to writing about the past that resides somewhere between historiographical and ethnographical modes. Fragments, testimonies, and recollections; newspapers, published histories, and institutional handbooks; museums, portraits, and local traditions—these are the objects of both history and memory, at once private, public, and social, held up as equally important to the novelist’s mission to reconstruct the past for his readers. By the time Hardy was writing his own interpretation of the period following the French Revolution, the past was offering up its multivocal stories. The great man tradition of history, in other words, was slowly changing. The novels examined in the chapter chart this process of change.

At one point in his tale, Hardy’s narrator comments that the heroine “Anne now felt herself close to and looking into the stream of recorded history, within whose banks the littlest things are great, and outside which she and the general bulk of the human race were content to live on as an unreckoned, unheeded superfluity.”²⁴⁹ The novel’s focus on these lives “outside” and its ethnographic interest in the objects and memorials of previous generations suggest that the historian and the historical novelist were shifting their vantage points of the past. Indeed, Margaret Oliphant wrote that a recognizable

²⁴⁸ Hardy, pp. 7–8.

²⁴⁹ Hardy, p. 99.

shift in the writer, style, subject matter, and audiences of history had occurred from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century. “In short,” she wrote, “it is not Edward Gibbon, but Agnes Strickland—the literary woman of business, and not the antique man of study—who introduces familiarly to our households in these days the reduced pretensions of the historic muse.”²⁵⁰ Oliphant’s conclusion that there are no epic successors in the form of history, the historical poem, or the historical novel on the order of Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, while seemingly dire, carries with it a significant number of points to be made about what in retrospect are the more positive trends in history writing in nineteenth-century Britain. First, movement was underway to offer another, domesticated version of history, that is, to write about home and the emotional life as part of the national experience, although this was not without its problems: “little weight can be attached to the chronicle in which a graceful individual act holds equal place with a national revolution,” Oliphant argues.²⁵¹ Yet this is a point of contention for those writing about history throughout the nineteenth century. Second, writing about history had become a professional and possibly profitable activity for more people than antiquarianism had been.²⁵² Third, writing history and perhaps historical fiction—like writing fiction more broadly—became increasingly accessible to women writers. Finally, the readership of history and historical fiction was no longer limited to

²⁵⁰ Oliphant, “Modern Light Literature,” p. 437.

²⁵¹ Oliphant, “Modern Light Literature,” p. 439.

²⁵² For a potentially less positive development—the widening gap between professionalism and antiquarianism—see Philipa Levine’s *Amateur and the Professional: Historians, Antiquarians, and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986).

the aristocratic and leisure classes. Indeed, historical productions were significantly influenced by the pace of modern life set by the burgeoning middle class in contrast to, for instance, “the elaborate and ponderous volumes of Gibbon,” which, along with those by his contemporaries, “were made for an age of leisure, for a restricted and narrow audience.”²⁵³ For the most part, these developments speak more generally to the democratizing of history in nineteenth-century Britain, a process made more powerful by a simultaneous focus on the role of both memory and affect in the political and personal lives of history’s players.²⁵⁴ In the remaining chapters, this widening access to history as part of the coalescence of social memory will be further explored.

²⁵³ Oliphant, “Modern Light Literature,” pp. 437–38.

²⁵⁴ On the notion of democratizing history in contemporary thought, see Cara Shepley, “Democratizing History,” *Anamesa* (Spring 2007): 17–30.

CHAPTER THREE:

Rupture, Risorgimento, and Archival Pilgrimage

It is a poor sort of memory that only works backward.

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland; Or through the Looking Glass* (1871)²⁵⁵

All memory is a sort of present time.

—“Time Past” (1864)²⁵⁶

Linh took a slow sip of his beer. “You think you are in a peaceful paradise here. But you’re hiding in a graveyard. Their violence is simply past, ours is happening now. Each stone laid in place here is laid on top of blood. Violence all around you, but you don’t recognize it. It’s easy for you—you don’t belong here.”

—Tatjana Soli, *The Lotus Eaters* (2010)²⁵⁷

In “Lord Nelson’s Relics,” an entry in *The Book of Days* (1832), we are told that “One of the most observable characteristics of English society at the present day, and perhaps of society in general, is the desire of obtaining some memorials of those who have achieved greatness, or have obtained notoriety whether good or bad.”²⁵⁸ Relics are the remains of the past. They are the physical manifestations—traces and residues—of an era that is bygone or is passing away, as Chaucer’s translator had insisted in *Notes & Queries*. As the passage above suggests, relics are valued based on their proximity or

²⁵⁵ Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland; Or through the Looking Glass* (Boston: Lothrop, 1898), p. 150.

²⁵⁶ [Unknown], “Time Past,” in *Essays on Social Subjects from The Saturday Review* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1864), pp. 245–55, 247.

²⁵⁷ Tatjana Soli, *The Lotus Eaters* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2010), p. 58.

²⁵⁸ “Lord Nelson’s Relics,” in *The Book of Days: A Miscellany of Popular Antiquities in Connection with the Calendar, Including Anecdotes, Biography, and History, Curiosities of Literature and Oddities of Human Life and Character*, ed. Robert Chambers, 2 vols. (London and Edinburgh: Chambers, 1832), 2:479.

relationship to celebrities—to those men and women who have made their mark, whether positive or negative, on history.

Relics as rarities also, though, invoke concerns with impermanence, the fragility of existence. In an era that witnessed the flourishing of the museum, the library, and the archive, the relic represents an object of history viewed as significant enough to be collected, preserved, and displayed for both its historical value and its rareness. They also represent a desire to possess the past; relic-hunting, or curiosity-hunting as it was often called in the nineteenth century, and dealing in curiosities thus became a big business for some, a pleasurable pastime for many, and a constant source of debate by those who felt that relic-hunting was indicative of an avaricious desire to secret away the objects of the past by the few that should be openly accessible to the many.

In the end, relics are about story-telling. They invite narratives regarding their history, their acquisition, and their worth to contemporary and future society. These objects of history—at once portable, palimpsestic, and political—are subject to narration *and* susceptible to dissolution, ultimately to the whims of those who choose either to tell and thus to preserve or to ignore their stories. This is as true of the relic, the souvenir, and the fetish as it is of the other elements of social memory—events, socially significant places, and individual lives.

In this chapter, I analyze works of historical fiction that look at the process by which these certain items and lives of the past, perhaps once forgotten, are incorporated into the social memory of the present for political purposes. In my analysis of Edward

Bulwer-Lytton's *Rienzi: Last of the Roman Tribunes* (1835) and George Eliot's *Romola* (1862–63), for instance, I will be looking at the ways in which the narrators stress what might be a kind of pilgrimage to the archive in the geographical and temporal (and sometimes spiritual) sense in order to argue that each return to the objects, individuals, and sites of the past offers the reader newer insights into the processual work of constructing social memory. Necessarily, I will also be following the path of others who study the formation of social memory such as, for instance, Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, who insists we “trace the social practices that give particular frames of remembrance shape and stability, those used in repair work and those with demolition potential.”²⁵⁹ As in the rest of the dissertation, I will be looking at how social memory is often a process of contest, violence, and resistance—a challenge to the prevailing narratives of the past that are forged from dominant ideological systems—and frequently tasks various forms of nineteenth-century authority.

“From the time of its first appearance, ‘RIENZI,’” writes its author Bulwer-Lytton in his preface to the 1848 edition of the historical novel, “had had the good fortune to rank high amongst my most popular works—though its interest is rather drawn from a faithful narration of historical facts, than from the inventions of fancy.” Bulwer-Lytton claims that there is an important artistic dimension to the relation of historical

²⁵⁹ Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (1994; rpt. New Brunswick and London: Transaction, 2008), p. 12.

material that is enhanced by the storyteller's talent for narrating the interiority of the past's great actors:

The success of this experiment confirms me in my belief, that the true mode of employing history in the service of romance, is to study diligently the materials *as* history; conform to such views of the facts as the Author would adopt, if he related them in the dry character of historian; and obtain that warmer interest which fiction bestows, by tracing the causes of the facts in the characters and emotions of the personages of the time. The events of his work are thus already shaped to his hand—the characters already created—what remains for him, is the inner, not outer, history of man—the chronicle of the human heart; and it is by this that he introduces a new harmony between character and event, and adds the completer solution of what is actual and true, by those speculations of what is natural and probable, which are out of the province of history, but belong especially to the philosophy of romance.²⁶⁰

This desire to outline the “inner history of man,” “the chronicle of the human heart” for the purpose of harmoniously joining the personal to the public and the individual to the collective is characteristic of many of the historical novels of nineteenth-century Britain examined here.

²⁶⁰ Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *Rienzi: The Last of the Roman Tribunes* (1835) (New York: Scribner's, 1904), p. ix. Subsequent references to this text will be taken from this edition and noted in the text by parenthetical citation.

In addition, the author underscores the way in which Cola di Rienzi's biography could be politically repurposed, in today's language, for contemporary use by his Italian descendants:

That "RIENZI" should have attracted peculiar attention in Italy, is of course, to be attributed to the choice of the subject rather than to the skill of the Author. It has been translated into the Italian language by eminent writers; and the authorities for the new view of Rienzi's times and character which the Author deemed himself warranted to take, have compared with his text by careful critics and illustrious scholars, in those states in which the work has been permitted to circulate. I may say, I trust without unworthy pride, that the result has confirmed the accuracy of delineations which English readers, relying only on the brilliant but disparaging account in Gibbon, deemed too favourable; and has tended to restore the great Tribune to his long forgotten claims to the love and reverence of the Italian land. Nor, if I may trust to the assurances that have reached me from many now engaged in the aim of political regeneration, has the effect of that revival of the honors due to a national hero, leading to the ennobling study of great examples, been wholly without its influence upon the rising generation of Italian youth, and thereby upon those stirring events which have recently drawn the eyes of Europe to the men and lands beyond the Alps. (pp. x–xi)

Bulwer-Lytton's *Rienzi* arises out of a nineteenth-century pilgrimage to the archive and offers a commentary on the contestatory nature of interpretations of the past that can be found in the various historical sources encountered not only in the archive but also in the larger library, the portrait gallery, and even the built environment of Rome.

The Italian Risorgimento fascinated the British. As its name suggests, the Resurgence or Rising Again was a nineteenth-century movement for national, Italian unification, following the fall of Napoleon, which sought to bring together not only geographically separated states and regions but also the various pasts of those states and regions. Writers such as Bulwer-Lytton, George Eliot, and Margaret Oliphant recognized the importance of revisiting the lives of many of Italy's misunderstood historical figures such as Rienzi and Savonarola in an effort to create a genealogy of national heroes for contemporary purposes. It is not uncommon in Bulwer-Lytton's work even to see his nineteenth-century British narrator read the life of the fourteenth-century Roman tribune through the lens (or perhaps the filter) of the life of seventeenth-century Englishman Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) in an effort to construct a sense of a shared past *and present* for his modern readers invested in the issues of reform.

In a gesture reflective of this cross-cultural, contemporary sharing, Bulwer-Lytton dedicated his historical novel *Rienzi* to a leading voice of the Risorgimento, Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873), whose own historical novel *I Promessi Sposi* (*The Betrothed*), published in 1827, is often considered a proto-nationalist work that gave voice (literally, as the authorized version was written in Tuscan) to the growing call for national

unification. Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49) praised the work in his 1835 review of the English translation. In it, he suggests that Manzoni's work heralds a new direction for the genre of the historical novel, albeit one built upon the tradition most identified with Scott.

It might be too much to say that this novel is, in every sense of the word, original. The writer is obviously familiar with English literature, and seems to have taken at least one hint from Sir Walter Scott. The use made by that writer of the records and traditions of times gone by, has suggested this hint. It naturally occurred to Manzoni, a native of Italy, that much of the same sort of material was to be found among the archives of the petty Italian states, now blotted from the map of Europe. It is obvious that the collisions of small states, though less interesting to the politician than those of mighty nations, must afford more occasion for a display of individual character, and the exercise of those passions which give romance its highest interest. But what is known of the great and good men who nobly acted their parts in these scenes, when the very theatre of their acts is crushed and buried beneath the rubbish of revolution? To drag them from beneath the ruins, and permit the world to dwell for a moment on the contemplation of their virtues is a pious and praiseworthy task. It is sad to think how the short lapse of two centuries can disappoint the hope that cheered the last moments of the patriot and the hero. "For his country he lived, for his country he died;" his

country was all to him; but his country has perished, and his name has perished with it. With the civil wars of England we are all familiar; and our hearts have glowed, and our tears have fallen, in contemplating the virtues and the sufferings of those who acted in those scenes; but, if we may credit the traditions imbodyed in this book, a contemporary history of the Italian Republics would display characters yet more worthy of our admiration and our sympathy. The Cardinal Borromeo is an historical character. The writer obviously means to paint him as he was; and the annals of mankind may be searched in vain for a more glorious example of the purity, the enthusiasm, and the inspiration of virtue.²⁶¹

The new direction of the historical novel is a desire to represent the illustrious lives of history, which speaks to an increasing interest in the sociology of celebrity and reputation in the nineteenth century. The recuperative and often rehabilitative efforts of the historical novelist to reintroduce or sometimes rewrite the lives of certain of these historical characters for contemporary edification is one way in which the historical novelist transgresses or seeks to collapse the barriers between history and memory, biography and fiction. There is a sense also that greatness is an evaluative term capable of being redefined by different generations and groups.

In recounting exemplary lives and their influences on historical action, the novelist attempts what the historian in the archives also seeks: to recreate the world of the

²⁶¹ Edgar Allan Poe, "Review of *The Betrothed Lovers*," *Southern Literary Messenger* 1.9 (May 1835): 520–22, 521.

dead. “To enter that place where the past lives, where ink on parchment can be made to *speak*,” writes Carolyn Steedman, “still remains the social historian’s dream, of bringing to life those who do not for the most part exist, not even between the lines of state papers and legal documents, who are not really present, not even in the records of Revolutionary bodies and fractions.”²⁶² The historical novels are invested with depicting the lives not only famous but also exemplary or worth reading about based on shifting notions of social significance.

This journey to the historical archive for fictional purposes is characteristic of Bulwer-Lytton’s novel. Indeed in his second appendix to the novel, the author takes to task the French source work for a newly translated biography of the Roman official into English for its hasty historiography and the place of privilege it seems to hold over his novel. As he explains, “I must be pardoned for this criticism, which might not have been necessary, had not the work to which it relates, in the English translation quoted from, (a translation that has no faults but those of the French original), been actually received as an historical and indisputable authority, and opposed with a triumphant air to some passages in my own narrative which were literally taken from the authentic records of the time” (p. 637). At issue here is the disciplinary divide between the biographer and the novelist. Bulwer-Lytton goes to great lengths to assert the “authenticity” of his story of Rienzi. He writes, for instance, that he considered writing his own biography of the Roman tribune but that “Various reasons concurred against this project—and I renounced

²⁶² Carolyn Steedman, “The Space of Memory: In an Archive,” in *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Jersey: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2002), pp. 66–88, 70.

the biography to commence the fiction. I have still, however, adhered, with a greater fidelity than is customary in Romance, to all the leading events of the public life of the Roman Tribune; and the Reader will perhaps find in these pages a more full and detailed account of the rise and fall of Rienzi, than in any English work of which I am aware. I have, it is true, taken a view of his character different in some respects from that of Gibbon or Sismondi. But it is a view, in all its main features, which I believe (and I think I could prove) myself to be warranted in taking, not less by the facts of History than the laws of Fiction” (pp. v–vi). He feels compelled to write of Rienzi at all because of what he perceives to be the unfair evaluation of the man by those who have taken him up for historical analysis—biographers and historians alike: “I regarded the completion of these volumes, indeed, as a kind of duty;—for having had occasion to read the original authorities from which modern historians have drawn their accounts of the life of Rienzi, I was led to believe that a very remarkable man had been superficially judged, and a very important period crudely examined” (p. v). So-called authentic documents, original sources, histories, biographies, and so on, all figure in the novel as the evidentiary masterworks (or proof Bulwer-Lytton believes he can show) to which the author has determined to remain faithful in his effort to rehabilitate the reputation of Rienzi.

Bulwer-Lytton’s defensiveness is indicative of the beginnings of a disciplinary shift in nineteenth-century historical studies, which British historian Lord Acton (1834–1902) came to attribute to the influence of German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886). Acton often considered historical works that preceded Ranke’s vigorous and

impartial scholarship to be “hearsay evidence” in need of “the most searching cross-examination,” in the words of one of Acton’s compilers.²⁶³ The hierarchization of documentation and sources is a reflection of the increasing access to the archives enjoyed by historians from the mid nineteenth century on. The historian would come to rely on these sources not only for informative purposes regarding subject matter but also for professional credibility. As Boris V. Ananich claims, “The analysis of historical sources is perhaps the most important aspect of a historian’s work. The professional competence of the historian can be measured by his or her ability to make the right choices when choosing from many sources, as well as by his or her ability to ascertain the authenticity of a source, verify the information it contains, and compel it to ‘speak.’ Even if the validity of the information contained within the source is doubtful, it still retains value as a reflection of its epoch—a source of information about the time and the individuals responsible for its content and appearance.”²⁶⁴ The final statement here is significant for my discussion both of *Rienzi* and of George Eliot’s *Romola* whose text challenges such documents as historical confessions of guilt (or sin) by prominent figures, which are often coerced under torture.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ J. Rufus Fears, ed., “The Essays in this Volume,” in *Essays in the Study and Writing of History* by John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, First Baron Acton, vol. 2 of *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, ed. Fears (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1986), pp. xi–xxi, xii.

²⁶⁴ Boris V. Ananich, “The Historian and the Source: Problems of Reliability and Ethics,” in *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, eds. Francis X. Blouin, Jr., and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2007), pp. 490–96, 490.

²⁶⁵ Ananich’s “The Historian and the Source” is particularly helpful in understanding these concerns as he takes the reader along through his research into the political trials during the 1920s and 1930s recorded in the former Soviet archives.

Social memory theorists today suggest that memory offers its own archive of sorts. According to Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, for instance, “as historiography has broadened its focus from the official to the social and cultural, memory has become central ‘evidence.’ Theorists now recognize, moreover, that memory frequently employs history in its service: Professional historians have often provided political legitimation for nationalism and other more reconstructive identity struggles. This involvement calls into question not only the success of historians in being objective, but the very notion of objectivity itself.”²⁶⁶ Questions of authenticity, objectivity, authority, and interpretation are central to developments in the varieties of historical fiction in the nineteenth century as well as the increasingly formalized theories of social memory that arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In his repeated criticism (Appendix II) of Rienzi’s French biographers, the Jesuit Fathers Brumoy and Du Cerceau, Bulwer-Lytton comments that the biographers inserted events, commentary, and so on, never found in the original, archival sources, and that “in justice to History and Rienzi, [he will] point out a very few from amongst a great many reasons, why the joint labour of the two worthy Jesuits cannot be considered either a work of authority, or a record of facts” (p. 632). Citing manuscripts, private correspondence, and other contemporary archival accounts, Bulwer-Lytton sets out to correct one of the prominent and, according to him, inaccurate portraits of Rienzi, upon which even Gibbon relied. (Although Bulwer-Lytton’s sympathetic treatment of one of

²⁶⁶ Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105–40, 110.

the “great men” of history probably would not meet Ranke’s and Lord Acton’s standard of impartiality. Indeed, the “Great Man” tradition itself falls under scrutiny in *Rienzi*.) Yet the author’s contemporaries and more recent critics of *Rienzi* have all noted Bulwer-Lytton’s tendency to stretch the truth or exaggerate the affective dimension of the novel for political purposes.²⁶⁷ It must be considered, then, to what political purposes could the rehabilitation of *Rienzi* serve. Andrew Brown argues that “the underlying signification of *Rienzi* is not so much political as spiritual. Its deeper concern is less with the Tribune’s public career than with the inward source of his energy—the ‘metaphysical operations of the inner man’ to which Bulwer believed his age was increasingly blind.”²⁶⁸ While I agree that Bulwer-Lytton’s novel seeks to restore a vision of political, spiritual, and democratic reform, I think it is important to focus on how this vision is inflected by an emphasis on the process by which memory and community come together and how historical fiction becomes integral in shaping this union.

By the middle to end of the nineteenth century, distinct lines would be drawn among those writing biography, history, and (historical) fiction. How, then, can a historical novel such as *Rienzi* participate in or shape nineteenth-century British or even Italian social memory? I believe through its appeal both to political action and the cultural imaginary. Even Acton acknowledges that historians and non-historians may come together in the realm of politics. According to him: “the science of politics is the

²⁶⁷ On Bulwer-Lytton’s own historical irregularities and inaccuracies, see Andrew Brown’s “Metaphysics and Melodrama: Bulwer’s *Rienzi*,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 36.3 (Dec. 1981): 261–76.

²⁶⁸ Brown, p. 266.

one science that is deposited by the stream of history, like grains of gold in the sand of a river; and the knowledge of the past, the record of truths revealed by experience, is eminently practical, as an instrument of action and a power that goes to the making of the future.”²⁶⁹ In terms of understanding how a people sees its collective history, Acton allows that “we must know its own idea of it, and must give a just weight to fables, not as truths, but as forces. So much truth there is in the saying that a people would be in the power of the man who should have the making of its ballads.”²⁷⁰ The term “forces” is significant here both in its reference to drivers and the ways in which memory is constructed. Politics, memory, and the imagination together can work to force historically significant action. Social memory studies takes this conjunction into consideration when looking at how memory can be shaped or manipulated for political purposes that rely on narrative and symbolic appeals to an individual and the community to which that individual belongs.

Rienzi is a novel that explores the palimpsestic nature of the present: a present built upon multiply layered pasts with men and women living, to use one of the most repeated phrases in the text, “amidst the ruins” of ancient Rome. For the protagonist, this past has a purpose, and in an early, ceremonial appeal to the people against the nobles, he speaks both to its purpose and to the joint ownership of a usable past.

²⁶⁹ Lord Acton, “The Study of History,” in *Essays in the Study and Writing of History*, ed. Fears, pp. 504–52, 504–5.

²⁷⁰ Acton, “The Study of History,” p. 38.

“Signors of Rome,” said he, at length, “and ye, friends, and citizens, you have heard why we are met together this day; and you, my Lord Bishop of Orvieto,—and ye, fellow labourers with me in the field of letters,—ye, too, are aware that it is upon some matter relative to that ancient Rome, the rise and the decline of whose past power and glories we have spent our youth in endeavouring to comprehend. But this, believe me, is no vain enigma of erudition, useful but to the studious,—referring but to the dead. Let the Past perish!—let darkness shroud it!—let it sleep for ever over the crumbling temples and desolate tombs of its forgotten sons,—if it cannot afford us, from its disburied secrets, a guide for the Present and the Future. What, my Lords, ye have thought that it was for the sake of antiquity alone that we have wasted our nights and days in studying what antiquity can teach us! You are mistaken; it is nothing to know what we have been, unless it is with the desire of knowing that which we ought to be. Our ancestors are mere dust and ashes, save when they speak to our posterity; and then their voices resound, not from the earth below, but the heaven above. There is an eloquence in Memory, because it is the nurse of Hope. There is a sanctity in the Past, but only because of the chronicle it retains,—chronicles of the progress of mankind,—stepping-stones in civilisation, in liberty, and in knowledge. Our fathers forbid us to recede,—they teach us what is our rightful heritage,—they bid us reclaim, they bid us augment, that heritage,—preserve their virtues, and avoid

their errors. These are the true uses of the Past. Like the sacred edifice in which we are,—it is a tomb upon which to rear a temple. (pp. 145–46)

Rienzi's claim here that the chronicles of the past are important "stepping-stones" to the present resonates throughout the text, which continually emphasizes progress as a method of analysis of significant people and events from the past and incorporation of the most important ideas from those events and lives in a bid for renewal and, more importantly, reform and improvement; "they bid us reclaim, they bid us augment, that heritage,—preserve their virtues, and avoid their errors." Progress and heritage, perhaps paradoxically, are deeply entwined in such a directive, and it is impossible not to read this as much a nineteenth-century British sentiment as a possible political message from a fourteenth-century Italian reformer. Alfred, Lord Tennyson draws attention to this sentiment and his own personal doubts about the efficacy of rising above the past and its failures or sorrows in his *In Memoriam, A.H.H.*: "I held it truth with him who sings / To one clear harp in divers tones, / That men may rise on stepping-stones / Of their dead selves to higher things" (stanza I, lines 1–4).²⁷¹ The stepping-stone is an important metaphor for a period of reform: advancement or progress relies on having one link to the past and one to the future, one foot steadying behind while the other foot chances to leap forward.

²⁷¹ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam, A.H.H.*, ed. Erik Gray (New York and London: Norton, 2004), p. 6.

The scholar, the poet, the reformer—all figure in the character of Rienzi who understands the power of appealing both to memory and to history. Recognizing that his audience is increasingly curious about the point of this address and the boldness of a commoner in making it, Rienzi directs their attention to an inscription detailing the rise of Vespasian to emperor. “Behold,” he commands his audience, “this broad plate of iron; upon it is graven an inscription but lately disinterred from the heaps of stone and ruin, which—O shame to Rome!—were once the palaces of empire, and the arches of triumphant power. The device in the centre of the table, which you behold, conveys the act of the Roman Senators,—who are conferring upon Vespasian the imperial authority. It is this inscription which I have invited you to hear read! It specifies the very terms and limits of the authority thus conferred” (p. 146). “Vast authority” was granted to Vespasian, but it was done so by the Roman Senate, Rienzi reminds his audience. “What was the Roman Senate?” he asks, “Representative of the Roman People!” And this is the main crux of his elaborate presentation: uncovered from the dust, “disinterred from the heaps of stone and ruin,” is a trust between the people and their leaders.

Rienzi introduces the possibilities of the cultural, political, and social uses of the past to create a government from below. He argues that the sanctity of space and sacredness of the object—here the Church of St. John the Lateran and “the device” granting the imperial powers—are significant only if they have relevance to the present and the future. He exhorts his audience to “awake! I conjure you! Let this memorial of your former power—your ancient liberties—sink deep into your souls. In a propitious

hour, if ye seize it,—in an evil one, if ye suffer the golden opportunity to escape,—has this record of the past been unfolded to your eyes” (pp. 148–49). By referring to the Roman Senate’s power to crown the Emperor, he argues that final authority to grant that power resides in the people. “Yes,” Rienzi claims, “it is the people who intrusted this power—to the people, therefore, it belongs!” (pp. 146–47). By drawing together the ruling classes, the ecclesiastical classes, merchants, artists, and the lower classes, he suggests that the past and knowledge of it are collectively owned. This is the democratization of the past and its archives; this is the political power of social memory.

The ceremony reveals the thrust of the novel’s deployment of the spaces and articles of what contemporary scholars have identified as the elements of memory—sites, objects, mysterious inscriptions, relics, and so on—that become a part of the social fabric of the novelistic community. Walter de Montreal recognizes Rienzi’s skill at weaving this fabric: “This is a man who learned the people by heart,” he tells the young noble Adrian di Colonna, “He knows he must speak to the eye, in order to win the mind” (p. 145). He must, in other words, utilize the emblems of an epic Roman heritage in order to appeal to its inheritors. Later, he chooses the title of Tribune to hearken back to this same heritage. In an early nineteenth-century self-help manual *Self-Advancement; Or, Extraordinary Transitions from Obscurity to Greatness*, which we are told was “Designed as an Object of Laudable Emulation for the Youthful Mind,” Rienzi’s life is included. And the now unknown author notes that the character or title of Tribune was one “so dear to the Roman people, as connected with the remembrance of the proudest

days and noblest names that their country had known.”²⁷² However, in the historical accounts, the tragedy written by Mary Russell Mitford (1787–1855), even the self-help manual briefly quoted from here, and Bulwer-Lytton’s novel, the fall of Rienzi is accompanied by many of his overreaching visual or emblematic comparisons he makes of himself to those great leaders who came before him. This is especially true when Rienzi desires to be washed in the fountain of Porphyry.

The spectacle and ceremony, blending as they do the ancient and the modern, become visual reminders of personal excess and eventual ruin in the novel. Rienzi’s fall is figured in his too sudden rise to power—his too steep ambition—by the narrator: “When, as in well-ordered states and tranquil times, men rise slowly, step by step, they accustom themselves to their growing fortunes. But the leap of an hour from a citizen to a prince—from the victim of oppression to the dispenser of justice—is a transition so sudden as to render dizzy the most sober brain. And, perhaps, in proportion to the imagination, the enthusiasm, the genius of the man, will the suddenness be dangerous—excite too extravagant a hope—and lead to too chimerical an ambition. The qualities that made his rise, hurry him to his fall; and victory at the Marengo of his fortunes, urges him to destruction at its Moscow” (pp. 274–75). Social memory once activated, it would seem, becomes a powerful check on this excess, suggesting that when individuals are invested in a communal vision of the past there follows a certain stabilizing affect controlled by the community. As John Nerone has suggested, “Social memory

²⁷² [Unknown], *Self-Advancement; or, Extraordinary Transitions from Obscurity to Greatness* (1824) (G. & W. B. Whittaker, 1830), pp. 40–41.

universalizes itself—it presents itself as a memory of the total society.”²⁷³ It is at these moments that we also observe that social memory allows for the construction of community identity independent of or perhaps even resistant to governing bodies and entities.

Memory may be either constructive or destructive. Bulwer-Lytton notes in a footnote in the Preface, for instance, that the “historical memories” of both the people of Sardinia and of Naples may lead to conflict in the process of contemporary unification (p. xiv). And *Rienzi* is a revenge cycle text in which conflicting memories and contested histories lead to discontent, political unrest, and ultimately to large-scale violence. We are told, in fact, that the murder of Rienzi’s younger brother—an accidental death according to the young boy’s killer, one of the noble Colonna under whose house Rienzi’s family sought protection—forever changed Rienzi. “From that bloody clay, and that inward prayer, Cola di Rienzi rose a new being. With his younger brother died his own youth. But for that event, the future liberator of Rome might have been a dreamer, a scholar, a poet; the peaceful rival of Petrarch; a man of thoughts, not deeds. But from that time, all his faculties, energies, fancies, genius, became concentrated into a single point; and patriotism, before a vision, leapt into the life and vigour of a passion, lastingly kindled, stubbornly hardened, and awfully consecrated,—by revenge!” (p. 15).²⁷⁴ This moment is thus identified as the point at which Rienzi is driven to bring together the

²⁷³ John Nerone, “Professional History and Social Memory,” *Communication* 11 (1989): 89–104, 93.

²⁷⁴ See Brown for a reading of *Rienzi* that suggests Bulwer-Lytton unduly emphasizes Rienzi’s motivations here.

people of Rome against bloodthirsty and spiteful nobles; more grandiosely, he is driven to lead a revolution.

Rienzi works throughout the text to build a narrative of Roman greatness that the people can absorb, one that will ultimately lead them to act on their and its behalf rather than out of fear of violent retribution and oppression from the order of barons and the foreign mercenaries they employ. He is at first rewarded for his boldness with the office of Tribune; then, however, he is excommunicated, imprisoned, restored to power only to be stripped of it by an ungrateful populace (in Bulwer-Lytton's estimation), and killed by the hand of his closest companion, Angelo Villani, in an act of revenge that completes the cycle of violence that marks the tale as a whole. Personal revenge as motivation for communal revolt has been a theme throughout this project as the last chapter analyzing historical novels set during the French Revolution shows. Private grief, followed by the work of mourning and memory, are explicitly figured by Bulwer-Lytton as driving factors of social action. Mourning, memory, violence, and revenge are brought together and heightened by the author to the level of visionary patriotism. Personal suffering, in other words, becomes a powerful prerequisite to evaluations of heroic action.

The loss of Rienzi's power is prophesied throughout the novel. And, of course, the nature of the historical novel means that readers already know of this loss, putting the power of prophecy into an unusual liminal space. Lord Acton had suggested in an early essay on the French Revolution that history had a visionary dimension not unlike the connections made among prophecy or vision, history, and memory in Bulwer-Lytton's

novel and later in George Eliot's *Romola*. In his 1861 "Expectation of the French Revolution," Acton wrote "There is a prophetic office in history, and our notions of the future are shaped according to our experience of the past. A people that has a consistent view of its career and of its position inevitably forms, in harmony with this view, some idea of the things that are to come. It discerns its ideal in the direction it has previously pursued, and its memories justify its anticipation. All these are part of the influences that form its character and spirit, and deeply modify its bearing. The past acts upon our conduct chiefly by the views of the future which it suggests, and the expectations it creates. It influences the present through the future. In their own glorious or mournful recollections nations found the hopes, the aspirations, and the fears which guide their course."²⁷⁵ It is perhaps for this reason that Bulwer-Lytton reminds readers of his own predictions in the Preface to the novel: "Many years since, the writer of these pages ventured to predict that the time must come when Sardinia would lead the van of Italian civilisation, and take proud place amongst the greater nations of Europe. In the great portion of the population there is visible the new blood of a young race; it is not, as with other Italian states, a worn-out stock; you do not see there a people fallen, proud of the past, and lazy amidst ruins, but a people rising, practical, industrious, active; there, in a word, is an eager youth to be formed to mature development, not a decrepit age to be restored to bloom and muscle" (p. xiv). This prediction is given similar voice in the character of Walter de Montreal who imagines that an infusion of foreign blood into

²⁷⁵ Acton, "Expectation of the French Revolution," in *Essays in the Study and Writing of History*, pp. 38–62, 39.

Rome will yield a new, stronger race: “as the reader has already seen, he had formed the profound and sagacious project of consolidating his usurpation by an utterly new race of nobles, who, serving him by the feudal tenure of the North, and ever ready to protect him, because in so doing they protected their own interests, should assist to erect, not the rotten and unsupported fabric of a single tyranny, but the strong fortress of a new, hardy, and compact Aristocratic State. Thus had the great dynasties of the North been founded; in which a King, though seemingly curbed by the Barons, was in reality supported by a common interest, whether against a subdued population or a foreign invasion” (p. 567). On the one hand, such a vision of the future is an achievement of the harmonious blending of the past and present that relies on shared memories to construct newly imagined social identities. On the other hand, such a vision relies on the wholesale submission of separate and diverse cultural and racial heritages based on a hierarchy of manipulated memory work. What these passages from Bulwer-Lytton and his character de Montreal ultimately point to are the disturbing possibilities of cruelty against racial and ethnic minorities that characterized many of the nationalist movements throughout nineteenth-century Europe and that culminated in the violent theories of eugenics and racial purity that marked the terrors of the early twentieth century through World War II. It may come as no surprise, for instance, that Hitler chose the Overture to Wagner’s opera *Rienzi*, directly based on Bulwer-Lytton’s novel, as “the musical theme for [his] Nazi Party rallies.”²⁷⁶ At these moments, the paradoxical nature of social memory either to

²⁷⁶ Joseph Horowitz, “The Specter of Hitler in Wagner’s Music,” *New York Times* (8 November 1998): Arts. 24 May 2010 < <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/11/08/arts/the-specter-of-hitler-in-the-music-of->

bring individuals together around a shared sense of the past or to destroy social bonds built around that past becomes most apparent.

Jacques Le Goff cautions against the urge to conflate memory and history, arguing that despite memory's attractive usability for writing about the past, the discipline of history "must nonetheless seek to be objective and to remain based on the belief in historical 'truth,'" for memory, by contrast, is untenably subjective:

Memory is the raw material of history. Whether mental, oral, or written, it is the living source from which historians draw. Because its workings are usually unconscious, it is in reality more dangerously subject to manipulation by time and by societies given to reflection than the discipline of history itself. Moreover, the discipline of history nourishes memory in turn, and enters into the great dialectical process of memory and forgetting experienced by individuals and societies. The historian must be there to render an account of these memories and of what is forgotten, to transform them into something that can be conceived, to make them knowable. To privilege memory excessively is to sink into the unconquerable flow of time.²⁷⁷

wagner.html?pagewanted=1>. Horowitz recounts an incident remembered by an acquaintance of Hitler in which the dictator attempted to appropriate Rienzi's visions as his own.

²⁷⁷ Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1992), pp. xi–xii.

Le Goff expresses a well-established concern with whether memory is an appropriate source of evidence for historical analysis while at the same time acknowledging that memory and history are engaged in “the great dialectical process of memory and forgetting experienced by individuals and societies.” Yet, as Ann Rigney and Astrid Erll have argued, literature is one medium by which to understand “the ways in which societies recollect their past.” Literature, they suggest, participates along with “institutionalised historiography,” in understanding how “collective memories are actively produced through repeated acts of remembrance using both a variety of media and a variety of genres.”²⁷⁸ Where the modern historian is limited by disciplinary boundaries, the nineteenth-century novelist is free to explore memory and its complicated alliance with history, even “to privilege memory excessively,” and perhaps ultimately to “sink into the unconquerable flow of time.” George Eliot’s *Romola* is one such example of a text that attempts to understand the place of memory and history in its characters’ and readers’ lives even while warning against memory’s ability to overwhelm the individual.

Romola is a novel about re-membering the past; specifically, it is a novel about putting various “pasts” together into a historical narrative that has value for the reader’s present. And not unlike Bulwer-Lytton’s *Rienzi*, one of the ways in which the novel both disturbs traditional stories of the past and aggregates this historical narrative is through its exploration of the emblematic and even visual nature of social memory’s appeal. In the

²⁷⁸ Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, “Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory: Introduction,” Special Issue of *European Journal of English Studies* 10.2 (August 2006): 111–15, 112.

introduction to her 1846 translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, George Eliot writes that "In the obscurity which criticism has produced, by the extinction of all lights hitherto held historical, the eye must accustom itself by degrees to discriminate objects with precision."²⁷⁹ She suggests that criticism has often worked to hinder historical elucidation, and it is my belief that in *Romola* the commentator-turned-author shows particular concern with expressing a type of historical acclimation to her subject that relies upon contemporary discourses of memory and visuality.

In *Romola*, vision merges with history and memory, perhaps unexpectedly, as a means by which characters gauge both their relationships to each other and their relationships to time—to the past, present, and future. The novel is, in fact, preoccupied with various ways of seeing, with how those ways influence an individual's understanding of his or her place in society, and more broadly with the relationship between vision and historiography. That relationship is very often presented by the author as threatening to various types of authority—empirical; religious and political; patriarchal and domestic; and archival. In what follows, I explore this preoccupation by investigating the points at which the discourses of vision, history, and memory converge in the novel in order to argue that the visual dimension of memorial culture in nineteenth-century Britain helped to shape historiographical methods, George Eliot's understanding of the relationship between memory and history, and nineteenth-century theories of memory.

²⁷⁹ George Eliot, "From the Translation of Strauss's *The Life of Jesus* (1846), Introduction," in *Selected Critical Writings*, ed. Rosemary Ashton (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 3–10, 10.

In *On Seeing*, F. González-Crussi writes that “‘*Recorder es vivir*,’ is a common Spanish byword: ‘To remember is to live.’ Not to re-live, mind you, for the experience remembered is never quite the same as the one lived. Reminiscences surge to the light of consciousness always in an altered state: decayed or embellished, a recollection is ever changed in proportion to the length of its confinement. Thus, if we should descend to the lowermost depths of memory in search of whatever shreds of our past might still be lying in the murky bottom, we shall find them entwined with spurious fancies and all sorts of secondary accretions.”²⁸⁰ George Eliot developed a powerful antecedent acknowledgment of this in several of her travel writings. In her “Recollections of Italy. 1860,” for instance, the increasingly famous author recounts her journey through Italy’s physical and cultural landscapes. She writes that travelling enhances one’s self-culture and that she anticipated journeying to Italy “rather with the hope of the new elements it would bring to my culture, than with the hope of my immediate pleasure.”²⁸¹ What she learns about herself as an observer is significant to understanding the development of her theories of the place of the past in an individual’s life: “One great deduction to me from the delight of seeing world-famous objects is the frequent double consciousness which tells me that I am not enjoying the actual vision enough, and that when higher enjoyment comes with the reproduction of the scene in my imagination I shall have lost some of the

²⁸⁰ F. González-Crussi, “The Clinical Eye,” in *On Seeing: Things Seen, Unseen, and Obscene* (New York, Woodstock, and London: Overlook Duckworth, 2006), pp. 195–226, 195.

²⁸¹ George Eliot, “Recollections of Italy. 1860,” in *The Journals of George Eliot*, eds. Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 327–68, 336. Subsequent references will be to this edition and noted in the text as “Recollections” followed by page number.

details, which impress me too feebly in the present because the faculties are not wrought up into energetic action” (p. 336). “Double consciousness” here constructs a complicated temporal dimension in the author’s mind: at once the viewer of these “world-famous objects,” she acknowledges that she is incapable of absorbing the entirety of the scene presently before her and will be inadequate in reproducing that scene in the future—a future that casts backward to the past to revisit this moment. She recognizes, in other words, that memory is malleable, even fluid, and ultimately dependent on the context of *a present*—a term (both linguistic and temporal) constantly changing. At the same time, she participates in the collective gaze of evaluation that determines these objects as worthy of attention in the first place. She stands in the space, in other words, of prior observers with whom she shares the memorial and visual culture of Italy across time.

Vision, history, and memory converge to influence George Eliot’s notion of double consciousness in her writing. In her travel narratives from 1858 to 1865, such as “Recollections of Italy. 1860” and “Italy 1864,” George Eliot devises a theory of historical consciousness that is deeply attuned to the role of temporality and spatiality in the life story of an individual during the period in which her novelistic interests turned to the historical and memorial aesthetics of past cultures. (*Romola*, for example, was serially published from 1862–63 in the meantime bookended by the published recollections of her trips to Italy.) George Eliot treats personal historical consciousness, in many ways, as the kind of accretion of individual and collective recollection to which González-Crussi refers in the above quotation. Her notion of “double consciousness” or

being multiply aware of the individual's position in relation to time and space also has resonance with the debates regarding nineteenth-century historiography. Lord Acton, for instance, had advocated for an investigation into the history writer's own assumptions as a way to understand the history he or she recounted. This is "historic thinking" as he terms it, which is often "more than historical knowledge."²⁸² Contemporary historian Patrick H. Hutton argues that "Recollection concerns our present efforts to evoke the past. It is the moment of memory with which we consciously reconstruct images of the past in the selective way that suits the needs of our present situation. It is the opening between these two moments that makes historical thinking possible."²⁸³ In George Eliot's "Recollections," she is both mindful of her position before the historical vista as well as the enhancements and limitations of her memory to recreate this scene in all its dimensional vividness for future audiences.

Travelling to Italy was for George Eliot a life-changing event. As she wrote to Cara Bray of her three-month tour with her partner George Henry Lewes, "We have had an unspeakably delightful journey—one of those journies [sic] that seem to divide one's life in two by the new ideas they suggest and the new veins of interest they open."²⁸⁴ Her "Recollections of Italy. 1860" grew out of this journey and marks a turn in the author's creative development—an interest in shared memorial aesthetics, exploring, in other

²⁸² Acton qtd. in Herbert Butterfield, *Man on His Past: The Study of History and Historical Scholarship* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 97.

²⁸³ Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover NH and London: Univ. Press of New England, 1993), p. xxi.

²⁸⁴ George Eliot qtd. in *The Journals of George Eliot*, eds. Harris and Johnston, p. 327.

words, how the past becomes a part of our present cultural experience. Mark Salber Phillips identifies the “historical pilgrimage,” which he traces to the late decades of the eighteenth century and early decades of the nineteenth century, as instrumental in shaping modern historical consciousness. “The idea of public commemoration by marking ‘historic sites,’” he writes, “has become a commonplace of modern life. For us, history is not only a story to be narrated; it is also an experience to be evoked . . . History, traditionally regarded as a book to be read, has become a scene to be revisited.”²⁸⁵ It is this sense of individual awareness of a powerful ecological connection to the past that characterizes much of George Eliot’s several travel recollections and her historical novel.

From the cemeteries and burial yards to the galleries and gardens, this experience is represented in “Recollections” as a layered one that accretes affect, history, and memory to subjective interiority. George Eliot explores the antiquities of the Italian cities and countryside with great enthusiasm, noting at once the sense of profound relationship to the historical pasts these sites represent as well as disappointment when something does not fit her preconceived notion of how that site should have looked. As she acknowledges upon entering Rome, for instance, “Not one iota had I seen that corresponded with my preconceptions” (“Recollections,” p. 341). Rome, regarded as the “Metropolis of the World” in Bulwer-Lytton’s *Rienzi* and by many of his and her readers, represents the kind of space in which the hidden histories of the archives combine with the architectural and archaeological record of the built environment for the edification of

²⁸⁵ Mark Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740–1820* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2000), p. 322.

the contemporary world. In this, then, the Metropolis is as much a temporal as it is a geographical location.

In some ways, George Eliot is taking account of a thoroughly modern experience. In these global sites of memory (museums, cemeteries, memorials, chapels, and palaces) as George Edgar Vincent and Pierre Nora might call them, the individual becomes at once aware of his or her own place on a historical continuum and at a loss to account for the disturbed preconceptions that shape one's own sense of self. This is the condition of the individual living at the beginning of the "The Museum Period," the age of the archive. As such, one notes in "Recollections" George Eliot's occasional longing for a key to this archive, a map or catalogue of its collections. At the Vatican, George Eliot makes this desire explicit:

Perhaps the greatest treat we had at the Vatican was the sight of a few statues, including the Apollo, by torchlight—all the more impressive because it was our first sight of the Vatican. Even the mere hurrying along the vast halls with the fitful torchlight falling on the innumerable statues and busts and bas-reliefs and sarcophagi, would have left a sense of awe at these crowded silent forms which have the solemnity of suddenly arrested life. Wonderfully grand these halls of the Vatican are, and there is but one complaint to be made against the home provided for this richest collection of antiquities: it is, that there is no historical arrangement of them and no catalogue. The system of classification is based on

the history of their collection by the different Popes, so that for every other purpose but that of securing to each Pope his share of glory, it is a system of helter-skelter. (“Recollections,” p. 344)

The organizing principle at work here is dismissed by the author as little more than the self-centered and aggrandizing acquisition of the world’s greatest artistic contributions by an elite few. In such a complaint, she implies collective ownership of these contributions to aesthetic and cultural history and the production of knowledge. But with that ownership—and in many ways this is represented by the albeit limited opening up of the archive, which Acton saw as profoundly important to advancing the field of historiography, particularly after 1860—came a rush of objects from the past in sudden need of cataloging, classification, and contextualization.²⁸⁶ In other words, the past was in dire need of a storyteller.

“The Recollections” are not wholly informed by disorienting newness. The topography of Italy allows for a reworking of the place of the past in the present life of the individual. At one point, George Eliot remarks that “The scene looking along the Forum to the arch of Titus resembled strongly that mixture of ruined grandeur with modern life, which I had always had in my imagination at the mention of Rome” (“Recollections,” p. 342). Here the terms “scene,” “resembled,” and “imagination” speak to the shifting nature of the individual’s construct of a panoramic timescape, one that

²⁸⁶ Butterfield, pp. 83–85.

blends past and present vistas; ancient and modern aesthetics and practices; ruins, which speak both to the presence and conspicuous absences of the built environment; and individual and collective histories. When George Eliot and George Henry Lewes arrive in Florence, where the former set her historical novel *Romola*, she recounts an instance of looking, of seeing, that is inflected both by the historical and the immediate: “One of our drives at Florence which I have not mentioned was that to Galileo’s tower, which stands conspicuous on one of the hills close about the town. We ascended it, for the sake of looking out over the plain from the same spot as the great man looked from more than two centuries ago. His portrait is in the Pitti Palace—a grave man with an abbreviated nose, not unlike Mr. Tom Trollope” (“Recollections,” p. 359). This collapsing of the historical—Galileo—through the architectural, the visual, the cultural, and even the physiological—his nose—into the familiar—Mr. Tom Trollope—underscores the steady expansion and contraction of the great and small, the wide and narrow, that characterizes “Recollections” and also comes to characterize *Romola*. For Acton, among others, this was deeply dissatisfying, and he criticized “Recollections,” claiming that “The Italian journey reveals that weakness of the historic faculty which is a pervading element in her life . . . Italy was little more to her than a vast museum, and Rome, with all the monuments and institutions which link the old world with the new, interested her less than the galleries of Florence. She surveys the grand array of tombs in St Peter’s, and remarks nothing but some peasants feeling the teeth of Canova’s lion.”²⁸⁷ It is a

²⁸⁷ Acton qtd. in *The Journals of George Eliot*, eds. Harris and Johnston, p. 328.

particularly unfair assessment, for this journey inspired George Eliot to write her historical novel *Romola*, a text in which she lingers not only on the monumental dimension of an ancient space but also on its influence on the lives of everyday men and women in their present, on how, for instance, the individual navigates living among history's collective remains while negotiating memory's individual reach. As she explained in a letter to R. H. Hutton, "It is the habit of my imagination to strive for as full a vision of the medium in which the character moves as of the character itself."²⁸⁸

Romola explores a theory of space that is deeply influenced by the negotiation between memory and history, which investigates the pressing concerns of translating how one perceives one's place in society into knowledge about communal experience.

The men and women of *Romola*'s late fifteenth-century Florence inhabit a space in which the historical record is always visible; they "set their eyes every day," we are told, "on the memorials of their commonwealth."²⁸⁹ Characters are, in addition, frequently made to recall images from the aesthetic, familial, sociocultural, and even spatial records that have been impressed upon their memories. Two early scenes, in particular, introduce rich examples of this: when the reader is introduced to Romola and her father and when Tito is introduced to both of them. Romola's scholar-father having gone completely blind late in life, relies on the scrupulous care Romola takes to keep his

²⁸⁸ George Eliot to R. H. Hutton, 8 August 1863, in *George Eliot: The Critical Heritage*, ed. David Carroll (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 206.

²⁸⁹ George Eliot, *Romola* (1862–63), ed. Dorothea Barrett (New York and London: Penguin, 1996), [Proem] p. 4. Subsequent citations will be taken from this edition and noted by page number in the text.

library and collections in the order he remembers; he “was perpetually seeking the assurance that the outward fact continued to correspond with the image which lived to the minutest detail in his mind” (p. 49). Romola, upon meeting Tito Melema for the first time, is struck by the young man’s energetic good looks, characteristics she has not noted in her father’s guests since her brother was disowned by Bardo for becoming a monk: “There was only one masculine face, at once youthful and beautiful, the image of which remained deeply impressed on her mind: it was that of her brother, who long years ago had taken her on his knee, kissed her, and never come back again” (p. 59). And Bardo admits to Tito that he “had thought that your unhappy country [of Greece] had been almost exhausted of those sons who could cherish in their minds any image of her original glory” (p. 60). In each instance, the correspondence of image to object is made to signify the ability of the eye to act on the mind’s behalf in creating a socially cohesive unit whether of the family, the community, or the nation. And in each instance, that ability is challenged by circumstances outside the individual’s control: Bardo’s library is kept in order by Romola, and he frequently defers to her for finding a manuscript; Romola has seen no other young, handsome men because she is virtually confined to her father’s home by social convention and filial devotion, agreeing to serve as her father’s scribe; and Tito’s ability to keep “any image” of Greece’s “original glory” in his mind is both an obvious temporal impossibility and a sign of Bardo’s Florentine bias, reminding Tito as he does of Greece’s fallen state.

Romola's isolation and that of Bardo—he is, as he declares, “alone in my blindness” despite a doting daughter and faithful manservant (p. 52)—as well as Tito's shipwreck survival may enhance their impressions, by allowing them the necessary solitude to focus more on what they remember, but their memories are, in fact, directly related to traumatic loss: the father's eyesight, the daughter's relationship with a beloved sibling, the young man's acknowledged connection to the past.²⁹⁰ As Julian Corner notes, “Romola's life is one of rupture, loss and disinheritance; however, she does eventually find reconciliation with her environment.”²⁹¹ In other words, Romola's story is one of reorientation from a traditional family unit to a non-conventional domestic setting with her widowed aunt and her dead husband's lover and children. The affect of loss on the female protagonist is explicit in the narrator's description of “Romola's young but wintry life, which had inherited nothing but memories—memories of a dead mother, of a lost brother, of a blind father's happier time—memories of far-off light, love, and beauty, that lay embedded in dark mines of books, and could hardly give out their brightness again until they were kindled for her by the torch of some known joy” (p. 59). Romola is unduly aged by the experience of loss, and those mentioned here are just the

²⁹⁰ For a psychoanalytical reading of trauma in *Romola*, see Julian Corner, “‘Telling the Whole’: Trauma, Drifting, and Reconciliation in *Romola*,” in *From Author to Text: Re-reading George Eliot's Romola*, eds. Caroline Levine and Mark W. Turner (Aldershot UK: Ashgate, 1998), [chap. 4] pp. 67–88. For a complementary reading on trauma in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, see Jill L. Matus, “Historicizing Trauma: The Genealogy of Psychic Shock in *Daniel Deronda*,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 36.1 (2008): 59–78. And on trauma more broadly in Victorian England, see Matus, “Emergent Theories of Victorian Mind Shock: From War and Railway Accident to Nerves, Electricity, and Emotion,” in *Neurology and Literature, 1860–1920*, ed. Anne Stiles (Basingstoke UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 163–83.

²⁹¹ Corner, p. 68.

first in a series of further losses: of her father, his library and collection, her brother's life, her husband's love, her spiritual mentor, and so on—that she will come to experience throughout the course of the novel. Romola's "reconciliation," to use Corner's word, is achieved through her relationship to memory and history, by her ability, in other words, to bring together the past and the present. But it is not reconciliation without a great deal of submission, and modern-day feminists often have found it to be both painful and flawed.

In *Romola*, the power of sight (and/or its lack) is a measure of the individual's relationship to his or her temporal and geographical surroundings. Sight and blindness become symbolic of the degree to which one has integrated into society and to which one comes to understand the negotiations between the individual and the larger community. In addition, sight has the power to harm the inner life of the individual. Throughout the text, Tito and his adoptive father Baldassare, whom Tito denies after creating the more convenient narrative of his adoptive father's death at sea, share in a complicated relationship to recollection, recognition, remembering, and rejection. In their initial meeting, Tito explains to Bardo and Romola that his adoptive father "was willing to risk his life in his zeal for the discovery of inscriptions and other traces of ancient civilization" (p. 63). He and his father embarked on "a pilgrimage full of danger, for the sake of visiting places which have almost died out of the memory of the West" (p. 65). And although a "record of his researches and results" existed, as Tito explains, "it was lost like everything else, in the shipwreck . . . The only record left is such as remains in

our—in my memory” (pp. 63–64). If the “historical pilgrimages” of which Phillips writes and the possibility of upsetting a trusted sense of the self brought on by those pilgrimages that George Eliot felt are any indication, then an unmitigated search for the past may in fact be injurious.²⁹² And while Bardo urges Tito to commit to paper what he remembers as soon as possible, saying “When I was your age, words wrought themselves into my mind as if they had been fixed by the tool of the graver,” Tito’s response echoes the narrative’s concern with the influence of trauma on sight and memory:

“I have had much practice in transcription,” he said; “but in the case of inscriptions in memorable scenes, rendered doubly impressive by the sense of risk and adventure, it may have happened that my retention of written characters has been weakened. On the plain of Eurotas, or among the gigantic stones of Mycenae and Tiryns—especially when the fear of the Turk hovers over one like a vulture—the mind wanders, even though the hand writes faithfully what the eye dictates. But something doubtless I have retained,” added Tito, with a modesty which was not false, though he was conscious that it was politic, “something that might be of service if illustrated and corrected by a wider learning than my own.” (p. 64)

²⁹² This would certainly seem to be the case in George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, in which Edward Casaubon’s obsessive work on his *Key to All Mythologies* leads to heart failure.

Tito acknowledges a distinction here between what the eye sees and what the mind comprehends as well as how affect may intervene in the processes of perception, retention, and comprehension. This distinction is taken up and variously explored by many of *Romola*'s characters and ultimately signals another important theme in the text: the crisis in interpretation.

Romola is a novel invested in understanding the challenges of seeing and interpreting what is seen to the formation of individual subjectivity and historical consciousness.²⁹³ As such, the novel deeply resonates within the broader cultural debates of Victorian England. As Kate Flint writes, "the Victorians were fascinated with the act of seeing, with the question of the reliability—or otherwise—of the human eye, and with the problems of interpreting what they saw."²⁹⁴ From the earliest pages of the text, interpretation plays a critical role in underscoring how the visual dimension of experience is unavoidably subjective but yet dependent on societal influences. The announcement of the death of Lorenzo de Medici, for instance, is accompanied by a discussion of prophecy and vision. A man claiming to have seen a woman who has claimed to have seen a vision of the "scourge of Florence" that she believes is signified by the death of Lorenzo is met

²⁹³ For a complementary reading of sight and universal humanism, see Chris Greenwood, "'An Imperceptible Start': The Sight of Humanity in *Romola*," in *From Author to Text: Re-reading George Eliot's Romola*, eds. Levine and Turner, pp. 165–80. In it, Greenwood argues that "the general thesis of the novel [is] that the signs of human nature are always present to the attentive eye" (p. 172) and that "George Eliot was equally concerned with harnessing and emphasizing the visual because she believed that the mind functioned best when it visualized the objects of attention, preferably from a memory of an actual encounter, rather than from an imagined impression" (p. 171).

²⁹⁴ Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), p. 1. See also the essays in *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination*, eds. Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1995).

with disdain by the bystanders to whom he relates his testimony. The question of interpretation is then taken up more generally when the man Goro exclaims, “For when God above sends a sign, it’s not to be supposed he’d have only one meaning,” to which the barber Nello responds, “Spoken like an Oracle, Goro! . . . Why, when we poor mortals can pack two or three meanings into one sentence, it were mere blasphemy not to believe that your miraculous bull means everything that any man in Florence likes it to mean.” Goro replies, “it is not the less true that every revelation, whether by visions, dreams, portents, or the written word, has many meanings, which it is given to the illuminated only to unfold” (pp. 19–20). Signs, symbols, visions, and prophecies are questioned throughout the novel, suggesting a shift in the nature and value of evidentiary material for the beholder as well as a challenge to many traditional forms of authority and knowledge.

What transpires in the text is, in many ways, a democratizing of knowledge and the expansion of access to it. When Nello presents Tito with a sketch in his shop, Tito offers his reading of the “symbolical picture.” Nello responds with “Ah! Everybody has his own interpretation for that picture,” relating that the artist Piero di Cosimo has asserted that “if any man is in doubt what they mean, he had better inquire of Holy Church” (pp. 34–35). Bardo poses this explanation for the importance of his work transcribing ancient texts: “What hired amanuensis can be equal to the scribe who loves the words that grow under his hand, and to whom an error or indistinctness in the text is more painful than a sudden darkness or obstacle across his path? And even these

mechanical printers who threaten to make learning a base and vulgar thing—even they must depend on the manuscripts over which we scholars have bent with that insight into the poet’s meaning which is closely akin to the *mens divinator* of the poet himself; unless they would flood the world with grammatical falsities and inexplicable anomalies that would turn the very fountain of Parnassus into a deluge of poisonous mud” (p. 50). Tito explains that on his journey to Athens, sailors and monks had insisted on interpreting the once great city through the lenses of legend, which elicits a contemptuous response from Bardo, “Talk not of monks and their legends, young man! . . . It is enough to overlay human hope and enterprise with an eternal frost to think that the ground which was trodden by philosophers and poets is crawled over by those insect-swarms of besotted fanatics or howling hypocrites” (p. 66). And throughout the novel, Tito’s face, his past, and his ambitions are often the subject of interpretation by those close to him. In each of these instances, subjective interpretation and *mis*interpretation are seen as threats to various forms of authority: the religious, political, social, historical, and even intellectual authorities that form the backbone not only of late fifteenth-century Florence but also of mid-Victorian England. Indeed what accompanies the crisis of interpretation is its potential for real danger.

One character, in particular, offers the reader a clear example of the relationship between vision and action, interpretation and danger. Fra Girolamo Savonarola was of great interest to the Victorians, especially because his story seemed among those eminently important to the Risorgimento. Margaret Oliphant had written about the

relevance of Savonarola to modern-day Italians in her 1863 article on the visionary priest for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Counting him among the “illustrious names” of Italy’s grand past, she remarks that the lives composing an Italian “Great Men” version of history, including Savonarola’s, were increasingly being studied by Italian scholars and politicians interested in understanding what the present had inherited from its past. “The names and memories of great men,” Oliphant writes, “are the dowry of a nation.”

Widowhood, overthrow, desertion, even slavery, cannot take away from her this sacred inheritance. It is natural to expect that, whenever national life begins to rise and quicken—when new crises of profound moment occurs, and the great act of the past begin to be emulated—that dead heroes should rise in the memories of men, and appear to the living to stand by in solemn spectatorship and approval. No country can be lost which feels herself overlooked by such glorious witnesses. They are the salt of the earth in death, as well as in life. What they did once, their descendants have still and always a right to do after them; and their example lives in their country, a continual stimulant and encouragement for him who has the soul to adopt it. There is, however, a well-understood phase of human sentiment which leads men to build the sepulchres of the prophets without much thought of emulating their career. Italy, of all countries, has perhaps the greatest beadroll of illustrious names, and she has not failed to do them honour with rites of hero-worship unknown to the reticence of the North. But it is not without a

significance greater than that of a mere popular demonstration or lavish bestowal of flowers and garlands that we behold rising over that agitated realm, in lines growing more and more distinct under the touch of reverential students of her strange history, the grand mediaeval figure of the Friar of St Mark's, who once held in his hands the destinies of Florence, and who, going through all the most tragic vicissitudes of fate, gave up his sovereignty in the pulpit only to gain on the scaffold the profounder authority of a saint.²⁹⁵

The celebration of Savonarola in Oliphant's piece and by mid nineteenth-century Italians is a modern-day co-optation of the religious man who sought reform of the Catholic Church, for his preaching and prophesying were ultimately met with condemnation by the Church. He was executed on 23 May 1498. And since then, his life has been open to interpretation. Oliphant writes, for instance, that "The life of Savonarola [has been] many times before written and re-written, in love and hatred, by religious zeal and political partisanship, by men who thought him the glory of San Marco, and men who believed him a precursor of Luther."²⁹⁶ And John A. Huzzard long ago noted that George

²⁹⁵ Margaret Oliphant, "Girolamo Savonarola," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 93 (June 1863): 690–713, 690.

²⁹⁶ Oliphant, "Girolamo Savonarola," p. 690. Johann Peter Kirsch, writing for *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, maintains that Savonarola's chief virtues of "zeal, piety, and self-sacrifice for the regeneration of religious life" were ultimately undermined "by his fanaticism, obstinacy, and disobedience." Kirsch argues, in addition, that "The erection of his statue at the foot of Luther's monument at Worms as a reputed 'forerunner of the Reformation' is entirely unwarranted." See Kirsch, "Girolamo Savonarola," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), 11 June 2009 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13490a.htm>>.

Eliot attempted to balance her characterization of Savonarola by blending two important biographies of him—one, the 1860 biography by Pasquale Villari; the other, by one of Savonarola’s contemporaries, Niccolò Machiavelli. “Consequently,” he notes, “her verdict on the Friar is compounded from the idealistic and devout Villari and the worldly Machiavelli.”²⁹⁷ As Bulwer-Lytton did, George Eliot rewords the life of one of Italy’s historical “Great Men” in order to reveal both his rise and fall and its affect on those not recorded in the contested histories of the archive. The Great Man tradition, in other words, offers access into lives of the anonymous who surround the famous.

The long passage from Oliphant above raises some significant points about how the Victorians and possibly their Italian counterparts viewed the man and his legacy, which relate more generally to the issues of vision, memory, and history. First, Savonarola is figured as not only a past actor but also a present-day witness to and perhaps even an inspiration for the actions of his descendants. Second, “dead heroes” dwell in the social memory of a nation’s inhabitants. Third, the memorializing project is often a nationalist project. Fourth, vision is profoundly important to both projects and integral to “hero-worship.” And, finally, authority is given both a visual dimension and a visionary component that rely upon subjective interpretation, which in *Romola*, as I have suggested, render that authority tenuous. It may also be said that, as with Rienzi, one’s suffering is open to political appropriation for the redress of social and/or historical wrongs.

²⁹⁷ John A. Huzzard, “The Treatment of Florence and Florentine Characters in George Eliot’s *Romola*,” *Italica* 34.3 (Sept. 1957): 158–65, 164.

This passage also mirrors a pair of observers: historical figures and modern-day actors. Of course, this doubling is further complicated by the figures of Oliphant, the critic, and George Eliot, the novelist, both of whom serve as outside observers of a particular Italian history. Oliphant even links this history to *Romola*, writing that “Perhaps no more powerful or lifelike picture of the time is to be found than that which is at present being set forth before the English public in the story of ‘Romola,’ a picture somewhat marred by the over-elaboration of archaeological details, but vivid and living, as was to be looked for from the artist.”²⁹⁸ Oliphant’s complaint about the novel’s “over-elaboration of archaeological details” is noteworthy: it suggests that the artist too adeptly ties the textual (archival) to the material (archaeological) records and, as an unfortunate consequence of so doing, subordinates humanity to history. The criticism, though, throws into strange contrast the role of vision in these various records.

In *Romola*, Savonarola’s visions and prophecies are represented as powerful instruments in persuading the priest’s followers to seek reform but not necessarily as reliable indicators of the historical record. This is made apparent especially during the final pages of the text when Savonarola is submitted to torture and forced to confess to false prophecy. In the pages that follow, confusing and unverifiable information swiftly circulates. Formal documents regarding the trial and subsequent confessions of Savonarola are issued, contested by his most devout followers, and some retracted by his most determined enemies for fear of resistance from the priest’s followers. Indeed, the

²⁹⁸ Oliphant, “Girolamo Savonarola,” p. 695.

authority and veracity of the written, public record is as much contested as the legitimacy of Savonarola's visions. At stake in these scenes is again the shifting value of evidence—oral and written (or more broadly visual)—in the history of historiography. In the introduction to her translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, George Eliot, then Marian Evans, had expressed skepticism regarding the utility of prophecy and vision to understanding the past. In the section entitled "Criteria by which to Distinguish the Unhistorical in the Gospel Narrative," she explains, "When therefore we meet with an account of certain phenomena or events of which it is either expressly stated or implied that they were produced immediately by God himself (divine apparition—voices from heaven and the like), or by human beings possessed by supernatural powers (miracles, prophecies), such as account is *in so far* to be considered as not historical. And inasmuch as, in general, the intermingling of the spiritual world with the human is found only in unauthentic records, and is irreconcilable with all just conceptions, so narratives of angels and devils, of their appearing in human shape and interfering with human concerns, cannot possibly be received as historical."²⁹⁹ George Eliot's personal, by now famous, crisis of faith seems quite certainly to have influenced her views on historiography as well.

At additional issue is the difficulty facing the historical writer in discerning the motivating factors of past actors. The use of divine intervention to explain the past does not, for instance, satisfy the agnostic author's desire to uncover the strain of historical

²⁹⁹ George Eliot [Marian Evans], "From the Translation of Strauss's *The Life of Jesus* (1846), Introduction," in *Selected Critical Writings* by George Eliot, ed. Rosemary Ashton (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 3–10, 3–4.

accuracy in ancient written texts, which are often encrusted with unverifiable spiritual language, reference, and symbolism, and she thus dismisses the visionary experience from legitimating the authority of the individual. While this dismissal may underscore a shift from spiritual to secular society in an era of increasing visibility and interpretation that many critics have noted occurring during the nineteenth century, it also provides readers of *Romola* with some clue as to how to read Savonarola's role in the novel—as a man open to interpretation, whose life story is subject to cooptation and manipulation.

The same is true of Tito, whose rise and fall is chronicled by Piero di Cosimo's painting of him at the moment he meets his adoptive father in public. Tito is a character whose motives remain under the surface, a surface upon which other characters project many of their own desires. Bardo, for instance, seeks in Tito an intellectual successor, someone who will promise to continue his work, for the old man's greatest fear is that "the work of my brain and my hands should not be a monument to me" (p. 57). The son's fear of being recognized by the father whom he has rejected for political and social expediency is striking, and Piero captures Tito's fright in a manner that suggests to Romola that the unease she has experienced around Tito may perhaps have a very real cause connected to the prisoner-father of the painting. Romola happens upon the painting while checking on the artist's progress on a commissioned work of her father as Oedipus, and there can be no doubt that sight, blindness, history, and its interpretation are central to the chapter entitled "The Painted Record." Hilary Fraser has noted that "George Eliot's representation of Tito Melema in the novel is from the outset extraordinarily

visual” and that “other characters in the text remark upon not only his appearance but his resemblance to mythical, religious, or historical figures and his suitability as a painterly subject.”³⁰⁰

Alison wrote that the historian must strike a balance between presenting the accomplishments of significant men and women of the past and “the whole social body of which they formed a part” in order to achieve what he terms the highest ideal in historiography—“philosophical history.”³⁰¹

Thus biography, or the deeds or thoughts of illustrious men, still forms a most important, and certainly the most interesting, part of general history; and the perfection of the noble art consists, not in the exclusive delineation of individual achievement, or the concentration of attention on general causes, but in the union of the two in due proportions, as they really exist in nature, and determine, by their combined operation, the direction of human affairs. The talent now required in the historian partakes, accordingly, of this two-fold character. He is expected to write philosophy and biography: skill in drawing individual character, the power of describing individual achievements, with a clear perception of general causes, and the generalizing faculty of enlarged philosophy. He must combine in

³⁰⁰ Hilary Fraser, “Titian’s *Il Bravo* and George Eliot’s Tito: A Painted Record,” *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 50.2 (Sept. 1995): 210–17, 210–11.

³⁰¹ Archibald Alison, “Guizot,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 56 (350) (December 1844): 786–804, 786.

his mind the powers of the microscope and the telescope; be ready like the steam-engine, at one time to twist a fibre, at another to propel an hundred-gun ship.³⁰²

The historian, in other words, must be mindful of his or her positional relationship to the subject. As Alison makes clear, the visual concerns of “distance” and “perception” are important for this standard of historical consciousness.

The Proem of *Romola* is often a source for literary critics interested in George Eliot’s historical approach, and in it, distance, perspective, panorama, and the powers to look both far and near are brought to bear on the narrative. We are invited to follow a Spirit, for instance, who “has been permitted to revisit the glimpses of the golden morning, and is standing once more on the famous hill of San Miniato, which overlooks Florence from the south” (p. 2). The narrator explains that his “is a face charged with memories of a keen and various life passed below there on the banks of the gleaming river; and as he looks at the scene before him, the sense of familiarity is so much stronger than the perception of change, that he thinks it might be possible to descend once more among the streets, and take up that busy life where he left it” (p. 2). As George Eliot’s Spirit spans the topography of the city in which he once lived seeking the familiar, he is made aware of a series of architectural contrasts that signal tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar. There are new spires, missing towers, closed gates, but the great dome, many of the churches, and galleries remain, sites he remembers having seen “from

³⁰² Alison, “Guizot,” p. 791.

the shoulder of his nurse” (p. 3). The architectural record, for the Spirit, marks ambition, pride, and even an aesthetic triumphalism characteristic of many late fifteenth-century Florentine projects, but he ultimately seeks to be among the people themselves—to be a part of their communal experience—participating in the political, the gustatory, and even the humorous celebrations that make up the Florentine way of life as presented in George Eliot’s novel.

[T]he yearning of the old Florentine is not to see Messer Luca’s too ambitious palace which he built unto himself; it is to be down among those narrow streets and busy humming piazze where he inherited the eager life of his fathers. Is not the anxious voting with black and white beans still going on down there? Who are the Priori in these months, eating soberly-regulated official dinners in the Palazzo Vecchio, with removes of tripe and boiled partridges, seasoned by practical jokes against the ill-fated butt among those potent signors? Are not the significant banners still hung from the windows—still distributed with decent pomp under Orcagna’s Loggia every two months? (pp. 3–4)

For the Spirit, architecture—more specifically, the built environment—is seen as an exterior, physical reflection of interior human desire. These spaces suggest not only the culmination of the community’s goals and aspirations but also sites of the ongoing exchange of information to be had regarding day-to-day happenings in the city.

Knowledge “is to be had in the streets below, on the beloved *marmi* in front of the churches, and under the sheltering loggie, where surely our citizens have still their gossip and debates, their bitter and merry jests of old. For are not the well-remembered buildings all there? The changes have not been so great in those uncounted years. I will go down and hear—I will tread the familiar pavement, and hear once again the speech of Florentines” (p. 7). The connection made here between the people and the space in which they live points to the ways in which architecture helps to shape memory. At one point in the novel, the narrator even identifies the built environment as part of Florentine “historical memory” (p. 45). And in remembering Bulwer-Lytton’s concern that the historical memories of separate states might prove contentious in regards to national unification, it is clear that the term historical memory allows for the conflation of the built environment with issues of inheritance and transmission.

The possibilities of misreading that environment, however, elicit a warning from the narrator.

Go not down, good Spirit! for the changes are great and the speech of Florentines would sound as a riddle in your ears. Or, if you go, mingle with no politicians on the *marmi*, or elsewhere; ask no questions about trade in the Calimala; confuse yourself with no inquiries into scholarship, official or monastic. Only look at the sunlight and shadows on the grand walls that were built solidly, and have endured in their grandeur; look at the faces of the little children, making another sunlight

amid the shadows of the age; look, if you will, into the churches, and hear the same chants, see the same images as of old—the images of willing anguish for a great end, of beneficent love and ascending glory; see upturned living faces, and lips moving to the old prayers for help. These things have not changed. (p. 7)

These passages from the Proem, which combine the Spirit's desire to seek familiarity with the narrator's caution that such familiarity is not easily to be found in the Spirit's panoramic review of the city, underscore several significant points about the relationship among vision (and, as suggested in these passages, the senses more broadly), history, and memory in the novel. Architecture—the built environment—affords a record that may actually exist outside conventional historiographical modes that chart change.

Architecture more properly may be said to reveal what some have called the monumental mode at work. It is this sense of monumentality that led John Ruskin to declare “Memory may truly be said to be the Sixth Lamp of Architecture.”³⁰³ Other traditional approaches to history implied here—the political, economic (trade), linguistic, and intellectual—are problematized, represented as perhaps too fragmented, even unreliable in explicating the human experience versus a historical approach rooted in understanding the epochal nature of that experience. This seems to result from the contemporaneous opening of ancient archives, which revealed that an overwhelming number of source documents for any one topic could render previous historical accounts inaccurate or could

³⁰³ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988), p. 170.

be found insufficient as evidence themselves. Continuity between past and present may be found, according to the narrator in this passage, in the inner, or personal and emotional, record of Florentine men, women, and children. If, in other words, the Spirit seeks familiarity across the span of “those uncounted years,” he is encouraged to do so by the narrator by looking into the interior lives of Florence’s modern inhabitants where desires, hopes, and fears remain constant.³⁰⁴ Tension exists between the broad (here connoted by the panoramic vision of the Spirit) and the narrow (connoted by the warnings of the narrator)—or general and specific—versions of historical focus. And the senses—sight and sound in particular—are often unreliable tools for empirically measuring change. As the narrator explains, “it is easier and pleasanter to recognise the old than to account for the new” (p. 3). Friedrich Nietzsche makes a similar point when he writes that “Our eye finds it more comfortable to respond to a given stimulus by reproducing once more an image that it has produced many times before, instead of registering what is different and new in an impression.”³⁰⁵ Recognition in both instances is marked by the presence of an object that corresponds to the recalled image.

A crisis of visual authority occurs when recognition and recall are disturbed by absence or lack. For George Eliot’s Spirit returning to Florence, for instance, newness is marked as architectural absence when the Spirit asks “Why have five out of the eleven

³⁰⁴ Although George Eliot cautions against the urge to provide an altogether too modern and overly sentimental finish to the inner thoughts of historical men and women in her “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists,” in George Eliot, *Selected Critical Writings*, pp. 296–321, esp. 316–18.

³⁰⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche qtd. in Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (1990; Cambridge MA and London: MIT Press, 1992), p. 97.

convenient gates been closed? And why, above all, should the towers have been levelled that were once a glory and a defence?" But his speculation for why this physical lack has occurred is translated into sociopolitical terms: "Is the world become so peaceful, then, and do Florentines dwell in such harmony, that there are no longer conspiracies to bring ambitious exiles home again with armed bands at their back?" (p. 3). *Romola*'s setting is precisely of this time when exiles, conspiracies, and armed bands along with political infighting, rebellion, and religious fanaticism threatened the city. Dorothea Barrett writes that "George Eliot is interested in the history she is studying, but she is even more interested in the studying of history, which sheds some light on her choice of Renaissance Florence as the setting: Bardo and Baldassare are both doing what George Eliot herself is doing—they are trying to revitalize the distant past."³⁰⁶ I would add that Bardo's and Baldassare's desire to revive "the distant past" is curiously juxtaposed in the narrative with Tito's desire to obliterate his more recent past, a pairing that marks *Romola* as a text deeply concerned with the process of negotiating between the acts of remembering and forgetting that characterizes modernity.

In *Romola*, as in "Recollections," the negotiation between remembering and forgetting takes on particular significance. On the one hand, an obsession with the past can be dangerous, even violent, to ourselves and others. On the other hand, its opposite, a dismissal of that past, is also true. Learning how to negotiate between these extremes—learning how to remember and how to forget, how to be historically minded—is central

³⁰⁶ Dorothea Barrett, "Introduction," in George Eliot, *Romola*, pp. vii–xxiv, xii.

to understanding that which makes us who we are and key to our commitments not only to the communities of the past but also to those of the present.

I would like to return now to a line from Jacques Le Goff regarding the “privilege[ing of] memory excessively” over history and his notion that to do so is “to sink into the unconquerable flow of time.” Both *Rienzi* and *Romola* share numerous similarities: their production is a result of the authors’ intense interest in the Italian Risorgimento and its illustrious names of the past as well as of those individuals set in contrast to those great men and women; there is a visual and emblematic experience of that past; the democratization of social memory is an important component of their accounts of the past; and so on. But they also share in their inclusion of an unusual narrative interlude: the incident of plague.

In both novels, the predominant narrative action is suspended by one of the character’s encounter with a plague outbreak: in *Rienzi*, it is Adrian di Castello who searches for his estranged lover in a city devastated by plague; in *Romola*, the eponymous heroine finds herself arriving on the shore of a community afflicted by disease. While plague works as a temporal backdrop to the historical contexts of these novels, the presence of disease in the texts is nonetheless highly curious because one of the primary characteristics of the experience of plague is its disruption of the “flow of time,” the very rhythms of communal life that help to form culturally shared narratives and social memory. In *Romola*, the “flow of time” becomes literal: she resigns herself to the fate of

a drifting boat, having “freed herself from all claims” but those of her memory. “Memories hung upon her like the weight of broken wings that could never be lifted—memories of human sympathy which even in its pains leaves a thirst that the Great Mother has no milk to still. Romola felt orphaned in those wide spaces of sea and sky. She read no message of love for her in that far-off symbolic writing of the heavens, and with a great sob she wished that she might be gliding into death” (p. 504). Upon landing ashore, she arrives in a small village in the final throes of pestilence. She tends to the dying and comforts the living. In a chapter entitled “Romola’s Waking,” she is depicted as being given new life. By restoring the bonds of fellowship, she is thus restored to herself and decides to return to Florence. Her story is also incorporated into the imagination, even the social memory, of the community: “Many legends were afterwards told in that valley about the Blessed Lady who came over the sea, but they were legends by which all who heard might know that in times gone by a woman had done beautiful loving deeds there, rescuing those who were ready to perish” (p. 559). For this community, as in many stories of the plague, time is marked by a before and after constituted by the overcoming of collective trauma.

In *Rienzi*, the plague performs the function of an intermission in the narrative’s historical chronology that allows for the foregrounding of an otherwise ancillary plotline—the love interest between Adrian di Castello and Rienzi’s younger sister. It also allows for a number of narratorial comments on the frailty of social organization. We are told that “the Plague killed art itself, social union, the harmony and mechanism of

civilisation, as if they had been bone and flesh!” (p. 377) and “that fiery Pestilence (loosed, at is were, a demon from the abyss, to shiver into atoms all that binds the world to Virtue and to Law)” (p. 403). The dream-like figure of Rienzi in this section does little more than prophesize for Adrian where he can expect to find his lover. Rienzi is an ousted leader, but his overthrow mirrors that of the many other nobles and wealthy men and women who have fallen by the plague. The plague interlude emphasizes that the social order is fluid and that what ultimately matters is sympathetic fellowship and love. It is fitting, then, that the end of the novel is marked by the reunion of Adrian and Irene.

Sympathetic fellowship, ultimately, is a key term in these two novels. It is the basis for the formation of social narratives and memories for sympathetic fellowship works across time and space. Sympathetic fellowship is an important step in the process of remembering that which holds the community together in times of crisis and catastrophe when even daily rituals are upset and traditional notions of time are not only disrupted but also ruptured.

CHAPTER FOUR:

The Contest of Memory

Dearest Uncle . . . We are in sad anxiety about India, which engrosses all our attention. Troops cannot be raised fast enough or largely enough. And the horrors committed on the poor ladies—women and children—are unknown in these ages, and make one's blood run cold. Altogether, the whole is so much more distressing than the Crimea—where there was *glory* and honourable warfare, and where the poor women and children were safe. Then the distance and the difficulty of communication is such an additional suffering to us all. I know you will feel much for us all. There is not a family hardly who is not in sorrow and anxiety about their children, and in all ranks—India being *the* place where every one was anxious to place a son!

—Queen Victoria to King Leopold (2 September 1857)³⁰⁷

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling

Aside forever!

It may be a sound—

A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring
A flower—the wind—the ocean which shall wound—
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound.

—George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–18)³⁰⁸

This dissertation has attempted to show that the nineteenth-century British historical novel was one way in which men and women came to understand the construction of social memory and that the theories of social memory can, in return,

³⁰⁷ Queen Victoria to King Leopold I, 2 September 1857, in *The Letters of Queen Victoria: A Selection from Her Majesty's Correspondence between the Years 1837 and 1861*, eds. Arthur Christopher Benson and Viscount Esher, 3 vols., vol. 3: 1854–61 (London: John Murray, 1908), chapt. 26, pp. 223–60, 246–47. Subsequent references to this text will be noted in the notes as *Letters of Queen Victoria*.

³⁰⁸ George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in *The Poetical Works of Lord Byron* (London: John Murray, 1847), p. 44, Canto IV, stanza 23.

expand our understanding of the genre of the historical novel. By looking at historical novels focused on specific moments of historical and contemporary significance for the British reading public—the Jacobite Rebellion and the French Revolution—and novels that contribute to contemporary movements such as the Risorgimento, I have argued that the genre represents social memory as a phenomenon at work in the formation of individual and group identity and the possibilities of resistance these identities allow. The historical novel of this period was concerned with what modern theorists and scholars of the past have come to reflect on as an interdisciplinary field of study that challenges our assumptions about the role of the past in the present. The historical novel mediates, to use a term often associated with social memory studies, the past by (1) affording a “social medium,” in George Henry Lewes’s phrase, through which the past—its traditions, symbols, and narratives—may be transmitted to future generations; (2) negotiating that past for contemporary purposes; and (3) focusing on the aesthetics of form to reshape the events of the past. I will conclude this project by looking at how the Indian Rebellion, a moment of significant crisis for the British, was mediated in Philip Meadows Taylor’s historical novel *Seeta* (1872) in order to argue that this event drew specific attention to how memory at the moment of loss and trauma could be manipulated, contested, and resisted.

The events of 1857–58, comprising what has variously and controversially been called the Indian Mutiny, the Indian Revolt, the Indian Rebellion, the Sepoy Rebellion, and the First War for Indian Independence, came as a shock to the British public at

home.³⁰⁹ As Christopher Herbert argues, the Indian Rebellion constituted a national trauma for the British, and his compelling and thorough work on the subject necessarily informs my own reading of the event and its role in Taylor's novel.³¹⁰ My contribution to the critical conversation regarding this event, then, is in my argument that this novel of the Indian Rebellion highlights a contest over a useable past and a people's memory, which ultimately centers on a female body and her struggles with identity, history, affect, and belonging.

Queen Victoria (1819–1901), in a letter written to the Earl of Clarendon (1800–70), called the events of 1857–58 “our great affliction,” a phrase often used by the Victorians to describe moments of great sorrow and suffering. The term “affliction” effectively links the earlier notions of trauma as a physiological wound with the later nineteenth-century theories of trauma as a psychological wound. It is also a term with deep spiritual connotations and as such may bridge the sacred and secular experiences of loss for many in the nineteenth century. In the next paragraph of that very same letter, for instance, the Queen explains that she had just paid her last respects to her cousin who had suddenly died following childbirth and that “The Queen leaves to Lord Clarendon's kind heart to imagine what this spectacle of woe must be, and how *deeply* afflicted and impressed *we must be*—who have only so lately had a child born to us and have been so

³⁰⁹ On naming the events, see Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press, 2008), pp. 7–12.

³¹⁰ Herbert, pp. 53–57. Herbert does surprising readings of Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* as texts influenced by the Indian Rebellion, but his readings of the novels of the event are more cursory.

fortunate! The Prince has been *completely* upset by this; and she was besides like a dear sister to us. God's will be done!"³¹¹ The Queen's letter, combining as it does the imagination, vision (in "spectacle" or scene), impression, empathy, and deep emotional experience (an "affliction" capable of "*completely* upset[ting]" an individual) before the exclamatory statement of resignation—"God's will be done!"—is at once conventional to Victorian expressions of mourning but also significant for the way in which it treats that mourning.

The letter is striking for the way in which it moves from national to familial and even personal grief. Yet this is, my dissertation has argued, a fluid move that reveals a belief in the close connections between national and personal experiences of loss. As Herbert writes of how the Indian Rebellion was perceived by nineteenth-century British men and women, "a society in its cultural aspect (that is, with regard to its discursive structures and its systems of value, its iconography, all its manifold agencies of self-expression) is susceptible to trauma in the same way that an individual person is—or at least may at times of historic shock display symptoms equivalent to those of psychological trauma. This is so because collective trauma is based deeply in individual emotional experience."³¹² Or, as E. Ann Kaplan matter-of-factly asserts, "it is hard to

³¹¹ Queen Victoria to Earl of Clarendon, 12 November 1857, in *Letters of Queen Victoria*, p. 254. Emphasis in the original.

³¹² Herbert, p. 54.

separate individual and collective trauma.”³¹³ Nineteenth-century psychologists and sociologists on both sides of the Atlantic would have agreed.

The Indian Rebellion is, as the passage from Victoria’s letter that opens this chapter reveals, a time of great uncertainty and suspense. It was an event that led people to look to the past and its traditions as a way in which to understand it. The Queen was encouraged by Lord Palmerston (1784–1865) to proclaim a national day of fasting and prayer, and this day of national observance might be read as an attempt to call upon a familiar tradition in which to understand and overcome this trauma—that of physical sacrifice as a form of religious obeisance to draw the attention of the Deity. Yet even the Queen, who was convinced to make the proclamation by her council in an effort to comfort the anxieties of her subjects, understood that such a day was not without its problems. In a letter responding to Palmerston’s suggestion that a fast-day be declared, she writes,

Lord Palmerston knows what the Queen’s feelings are with regard to Fast-days, which she thinks do not produce the desired effect—from the manner in which they are appointed, and the selections made for the Service—but she will not oppose the natural feeling which any one must partake in, of a desire to pray for our fellow-countrymen and women who are exposed to such imminent danger, and therefore sanctions his consulting the Archbishop on the subject. She would,

³¹³ E. Ann Kaplan, *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (New Brunswick NJ and London: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2005), p. 1.

however, suggest its being more appropriately called a day of prayer and intercession for our suffering countrymen, than a fast and humiliation, and of its being on a *Sunday*, and not a week-day: on the last Fast-day, the Queen heard it generally remarked, that it produced more harm than good, and that, if it were on a Sunday, it would be much more generally observed. However, she will sanction whatever is proper, but thinks it ought to be as soon as possible (in a fortnight or three weeks) if it is to be done at all.³¹⁴

This passage is noteworthy for its attention to the politics of national days of observance and to the power of upsetting the rhythms of national life. But there was consensus that the event called for some sort of official comment or marking. The Queen's letter reveals that the monarch understood her power to alter these rhythms, to manipulate the relationships among memory, affect, and historical time.

The Queen also understood the stakes in declaring a national day of sacrifice and prayer in the midst of uncertain violence taking place beyond Britain's borders. For a proclamation of a fast-day for the Indian Rebellion too soon followed, as an entry in *Chamber's Encyclopedia* shows, one proclaimed for the Crimean War: "In the United Kingdom, on occasions of wars and public calamities, the sovereign has from time to time appointed by proclamation a day for a solemn national fast, humiliation, and prayer—as on 21st March 1855 (the Crimean war), and 7th October 1857 (the Indian

³¹⁴ Queen Victoria to Viscount Palmerston, 11 September 1857, in *Letters of Queen Victoria*, pp. 247–48.

Mutiny).”³¹⁵ The Queen’s letter to her uncle that opens this chapter also reveals how closely the monarch believed the two events to be connected. She was, in fact, critical of the Government’s response to the Rebellion, writing to Palmerston that she felt it too little to meet the magnitude of the crisis, which alarmed her, “having seen exactly the same course followed in the late War.”³¹⁶ Queen Victoria’s correspondence at this time suggests she was deeply troubled about an Empire becoming so overextended as to suffer embarrassment should it experience a loss abroad. According to Justin McCarthy, the spread of mutiny “meant the possibility of a momentary collapse of all British authority in India.”³¹⁷ And the Queen was also concerned that an overextended England would become vulnerable to attack from its enemies at home should it need to continue to replenish its troops overseas in an extended conflict. The Queen, in other words, was aware that both Britain’s image and its very existence were being threatened by the events taking place in its colonies.

There is something more, though, in her correspondence. The Queen was concerned that the events taking place in India would lead to indiscriminate violence both by those rebelling and by those putting down the insurgency. Numerous critics have pointed to the former as one reason that the Indian Rebellion was considered so traumatic for the British. The allegations of abduction, rape, mutilation, and murder of innocent

³¹⁵ “Fast,” *Chamber’s Encyclopedia: A Dictionary of Useful Knowledge*, New edn., vol. 4: Dionysius to Friction (London and Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1889), pp. 556–59, 558.

³¹⁶ Queen Victoria to Viscount Palmerston, 22 August 1857, in *Letters of Queen Victoria*, p. 244.

³¹⁷ Justin McCarthy, *The Indian Mutiny* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1887), p. 35.

British men, women, and children by the Indian rebels are, as Herbert and Astrid Erll show, part of the cultural topoi of the Rebellion.³¹⁸ Accounts—often unconfirmed, sometimes entirely untrue—of indiscriminate violence done to the British had become commonplace in the newspaper reports, histories, rumors, and novels of and about the Rebellion. Even the Queen registers reports of the violence in terms that mark the possibilities of extreme psychological and bodily wounding; “the horrors committed on the poor ladies—women and children—are unknown in these ages, and make one’s blood run cold,” she writes. “Horror”; an experience “unknown in these ages”; and a fright enough to slow even the body’s circulatory rhythms are attempts to describe something ultimately indescribable.³¹⁹ The conflation of the psychological with the physiological responses to shock and the inability accurately to describe the experience are, as Jill L. Matus has argued, symptomatic of the way nineteenth-century British men and women described trauma in the decades before the medical concept had been defined.³²⁰

The Queen also understood the political dimension of this violence. She intimated, for instance, in another letter to the Earl of Clarendon that she may understand,

³¹⁸ Herbert, pp. 25–32; Astrid Erll, “Remembering across Time, Space, and Cultures: Premediation, Remediation, and the ‘Indian Mutiny,’” in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, eds. Erll and Ann Rigney (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 109–38; and Erll, “‘Re-writing’ as Re-visioning: Modes of Representing the ‘Indian Mutiny’ in British Literature, 1857 to 2000,” “Literature and the Production of Cultural Memory,” eds. Erll and Rigney. Special Issue of *European Journal of English Studies* 10.2 (2006): 163–85.

³¹⁹ Herbert makes a compelling argument for “horror” as a key trope in Mutiny literature. See pp. 25–26, 270–71.

³²⁰ These are considered symptomatic of responses to trauma today as well.

while Lord Clarendon did not, the Maharajah's lack of "sympathy with the [British] sufferers" of Indian violence:

Though we might have perhaps wished the Maharajah to express his feelings on the subject of the late atrocities in India, it was hardly to be expected that he (naturally of a negative, though gentle and very amiable disposition) should pronounce an opinion on so painful a subject, attached as he is to his country, and naturally *still* possessing, with all his amiability and goodness, an *Eastern nature*; he can also hardly, a deposed Indian Sovereign, *not very* fond of the British rule as represented by the East India Company, and, above all, impatient of Sir John Login's tutorship, be expected to *like* to hear his country-people called *fiends* and *monsters*, and to see them brought in hundreds, if not thousands, to be executed.

His best course is to say nothing, she must think.³²¹

This is just one moment of imperial awareness such as those that Herbert argues challenge recent scholarship on the Indian Rebellion that argues the event was viewed by the British only in a too-simplistic dichotomy of monstrous Indians versus virtuous and heroic Britons. For the Queen was also concerned about the violence that she felt would no doubt be done (and was) to those sympathetic with the Indian rebels. Lord Canning (1812–62) had written to the Queen that "One of the greatest difficulties which lie

³²¹ Queen Victoria to the Earl of Clarendon, 23 September 1857, in *Letters of Queen Victoria*, p. 248.

ahead—and Lord Canning grieves to say so to your Majesty—will be the violent rancour of a very large proportion of the English community against every native Indian of every class. There is a rabid and indiscriminate vindictiveness abroad, even amongst many who ought to set a better example, which it is impossible to contemplate without something like a feeling of shame for one's fellow countrymen.”³²² The suppression of the Rebellion was indeed brutal.

In her comment that horrific acts against women and children were “unknown in these ages,” Victoria also speaks to a belief in an era of progress and improvement—two keywords of the nineteenth century—that should not be subject to acts she and others felt were not only barbaric but also defied the so-called civilizing mission of the British in India. In the social memory of Britain and India, however, what constituted improvement and what counted as a threat to a way of life deeply influenced by the past was hotly contested.

The Rebellion was brought on by, among other things, a confluence of events that suggested to the native population that not only their lives but also their pasts were being threatened. Victorian historians of and novelists who wrote about the Indian Rebellion note, for example, that what the British considered to be improvements to the region were often viewed with suspicion by the native population. Osmund Airy, for instance, wrote that “The very improvements effected by Dalhousie and Bentinck induced the belief that

³²² Viscount Canning to Queen Victoria, 25 September 1857, in *Letters of Queen Victoria*, pp. 249–52, 251. Not insignificantly, Herbert quotes from another letter from Lord Canning that treats the response of the British as quite out of control, noting “the rabid unreasoning spirit of blood and vengeance” with which that response was carried out (p. 294n7).

all Indian customs were to be swept away.”³²³ And as Sir George Forrest explains in his *History of the Indian Mutiny* (1904), “The establishment of telegraphs and railways, and the opening of schools, had created a feeling of unrest in the land, and appeared to the orthodox to threaten the destruction of the social and religious fabric of Hindu society.”³²⁴

These works often cite factors believed to have instigated the revolt that are directly tied to perceived social and communal grievances rather than to the financial concerns of the Indian soldiers and deserve to be reconsidered through the lens of social memory. First, the introduction of the Enfield rifle required the use of cartridges the soldiers believed were greased with the fat from pigs and cows. This grease was spiritually offensive to the Muslim and Hindu soldiers alike.³²⁵ Second, the rumor that the British were aiming to force Indian men and women to convert to Christianity and that the greased cartridges were just one step in the process by which the loss of caste would pave the way for conversion spread with unaccountable speed. According to Sir

³²³ Osmund Airy, *Text-Book of English History from the Earliest Times for Colleges and Schools* (London: Longmans, Green, 1891), p. 497.

³²⁴ Sir George Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny: Reviewed and Illustrated from Original Documents* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1904), p. 4.

³²⁵ Sir John William Kaye and George Bruce Malleeson, *Kaye's and Malleeson's History of the Indian Mutiny, 1857–8* (London: W. H. Allen, 1888), 1:364; Forrest, pp. 1–6; John Cave-Brown, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857: Being a Narrative of the Measures by Which the Punjab Was Saved and Delhi Recovered during the Indian Mutiny* (London and Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1861), 2:300–03. Thomas Rice Holmes, *A History of the Indian Mutiny and of the Disturbances Which Accompanied It among the Civil Population* (London: W. H. Allen, 1888), pp. 81–82; Airy, p. 497; Robert Wilson, *The Life and Times of Queen Victoria* (London: Cassell, 1891) 1:727; [Unknown], “The English in India,” *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 25.149 (October 1862): 685–91, 688, [Unknown], “Art. III—The Indian Mutiny,” *The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* (1 October 1879): 358–86, 359–62.

John William Kaye, “The story of the greased cartridges was by this time in every mouth. There was not a Sipáhi in the Lines of Barrackpúr who was not familiar with it. There were few who did not believe that it was a deliberate plot, on the part of the English, designed to break down the caste of the Native soldier. And many were persuaded that there was an ultimate design to bring all men, along a common road to pollution, to the unclean faith of the beef-devouring, swine-eating Faringhi, who had conquered their country and now yearned to extirpate the creeds of their countrymen.”³²⁶ Third, an aggressive annexation policy raised serious questions about inheritance and adoption practices for those natives who retained some power.³²⁷ And, fourth, the controversial issue of whether native widows could and should be allowed to remarry had emerged after a British act made such remarriage legal.³²⁸

In these instances, the losses of caste, faith, and tradition were considered real possibilities, and individuals expressed their concerns in the idiom of pollution and containment; the fear of physical, psychological, spiritual, and communal defilement was palpable. In recounting one of the many versions of how the rumor of the greased

³²⁶ Kaye, 1:364–65; Forrest, pp. 4–6; Holmes, p. 82; Wilson, 1:727.

³²⁷ Wilson, 1:727.

³²⁸ Kaye, 1:364; Forrest, p. 4; P. B. Maxwell, “Law in and for India,” *The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* 77 (1 January 1862): 1–30, 11. Maxwell suggests, however, that the issue was not controversial. “In 1856, the native temper was again tried, if we may believe ‘Old India,’ by the act which declared valid the marriage of Hindu widows, notwithstanding the Hindu law, as old as Menu and probably older, which condemned them to the alternative of remaining nuns or becoming social evils. But the native mind bore the shock with callous insensibility. The patient spirit had endured with resignation the extinguishment of the poor widows’ funeral torch; it now endured without anguish their lighting the hymeneal one; and it asserted that none but the highest church Brahmins refuse to celebrate nuptials which the Indian Moses forbade” (p. 11).

cartridges began and its affect on the soldiers, Thomas Rice Holmes writes that “It is hard to convey to the mind of an English reader an adequate idea of the force of the shock beneath the imagination of that Brahmin must have reeled when he heard these words. It was all, true, then, he must have felt. The Government were really bent upon ruining him. They had devised an expedient which, under the specious pretext of putting a better weapon into his hands, was to destroy his honour, his social position, everything that made life worth having, and to pave the way for his perversion to Christianity.”³²⁹ And Forrest explains, “To the Brahmin sepoy the loss of caste meant becoming an outcast, an object of loathing and disgust. It brought shame and misery upon his wife and children; it deprived him of the consolation of his religion, and it entailed upon him, instead of an eternity of happiness, an eternity of woe. To escape the loss of caste the sepoys determined to band together to refuse the cartridges.”³³⁰ To the soldiers already suspicious of the designs of the British on their country, which had fallen under the general term of “improvement,” these instances represented a traumatic betrayal of trust.

What these factors reveal, in addition, is a contest over the role of the past in the present, over memory in identity formation. Queen Victoria acknowledges this in her address after the suppression of the Rebellion. She speaks both of the rights of individuals to practice their faith and to adhere to or follow their traditions; “acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion,” she offers, “we disclaim the right

³²⁹ Holmes, p. 82.

³³⁰ Forrest, pp. 4–6.

and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects” and that “due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India.”³³¹ In her brief address, the Queen suggests that what is most important to the people of India is an identity built upon the inheritance of the past, built, in other words, upon social memory. She takes great care in the address to suggest that a future administration of India by Britain alone will respect the social memory of the Indian men and women while continuing its advancement. The Queen’s address delivered throughout India was clearly designed to win the hearts and minds, to use a modern phrase, of the Indians subject to her power, but this would require a careful drawing together of the elements of social memory from both the colonizing and the colonized.

This effort is central to Taylor’s historical novel *Seeta, 1857* (1872), which is set in the years of the Indian Rebellion (1857–58). The work of social memory in this novel is presented in the moments of cultural encounter and subsequent tension between the British and the Indians. More specifically, the novel suggests that tension between the British and the Indians in the year leading up to the Indian Rebellion went beyond legal and administrative disputes to include a contest over the social memory of the native population. This contest is given narrative life in the personal struggle of Seeta to choose between her Hindu way of life and her husband’s British traditions.

³³¹ Queen Victoria, “Queen Victoria’s Proclamation to the Princes, Chiefs, and People of India.—Read in the Principal Cities of India, November 1, 1858,” in *The History of the Indian Revolt and of the Expeditions to Persia, China, and Japan, 1856-7-8*, by George Dodd (London: W. and R. Chambers, 1859), pp. 623–24, 624.

Taylor offers his readers an educative model for understanding and sympathizing with the other. One could say that he is attempting to win the hearts and minds of the British public to sympathize with the native population. Of course, it is my contention that the homogenizing tendencies of the civil authorities, which looked to bring the “native mind” under the power of the British administration, were often resisted by a defense of native traditions, customs, and so on. Taylor suggests that a British audience would nonetheless understand many of the struggles over memory’s role in the formation of both personal and social identity. This understanding of the social nature of memory is often overlooked in the modern examinations of Victorian reading publics.³³²

Seeta is a tale of colonial encounter, from the romantic and domestic to the memorial and historical to the ethnographic and political. Indeed, the author assigns himself the place of the ethnographer when he writes, “In my present tale it has not been my purpose to write history; but to give, as it were an episode, a general impression of the time which of all others in the history of India, is the most absorbing and interesting to the English reader, and I have purposely avoided the sickening details of pitiless massacre and suffering, which have already been illustrated by many writers, and which, of necessity, must be repeated in Sir John Kaye’s history.”³³³ This passage suggests that almost fifteen years later, the event was still foremost in the minds of British readers as

³³² Herbert briefly mentions this text’s efforts to teach its readers that racism is unaccountable. See pp. 279–80.

³³³ Philip Meadows Taylor, *Seeta: 1857* (1872) (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989), p. viii. Subsequent references to the novel will be to this edition and noted parenthetically in the text by page number.

the central event in the relationship between the two countries. The novel, then, will offer an impression of this relationship—one of affective understanding, sympathetic fellowship, and even observations through an ethnographic lens.

This passage gestures toward the evolution of the social sciences and the humanities in the nineteenth century as Taylor draws attention to an increasingly important place for the ethnographer. We are told in the author's preface, for instance, that *Seeta* is the third in a series detailing the two hundred years of history prior to the Rebellion but that the author is not writing a history but rather an ethnographic "impression." He claims the ethnographer's *ethos* by explaining to his readers that he "lived among the people" (p. viii). This novel, then, also challenges conventional notions of the historical novel that limit contributions to the genre based on those texts written about settings and events that precede an author's own time. It is a limitation that was not strictly adhered to in the nineteenth century, and indeed by looking beyond that limitation today's readers can, in fact, see the relationship between the historical novel and social memory more clearly.

Despite Taylor's repeated entreaties that *Seeta's* tale is not conventional history but impression, the reader nonetheless must also encounter history as he or she reads the work. For Taylor's suggestion is that the English reader of the early 1870s can indeed learn something about the causes of the Rebellion through this fictive interpretation; or, and more to the point of this dissertation, through fiction, the reader can *learn* something about how the Indian people viewed the role of memory in their lives, which Taylor held

to be central to the construction of individual identity in this novel. The idea that another culture can be learned about through fiction marks this colonial tale as it does the other historical novels under examination in this project: through the novel's structural conventions, it is presumed that the unfamiliar—the colonial other and his or her culture—can become familiar. Holmes had suggested that it was difficult to explain the importance of the loss of caste to an English reader. Forrest expressed the same sentiment when he wrote that “To the European the awful doom involved in the loss of caste is hardly intelligible.”³³⁴ One reviewer for *Country Life Illustrated* would go even further and suggest that ignorance on the part of the British was a contributing factor to the animosity between the British and the Indians. In a review of several non-fictional and fictional accounts of the Indian Rebellion, this reviewer asserts that “What caused the Mutiny of 1857, and might cause another someday, was the bluntness of the English manner, the apparent incapacity of the Englishman to enter into the feelings and sympathise with the racial character of men of other blood. You may see that tendency nearer home than India—in Ireland and in Wales—where, from mere defect of manner, Englishmen rarely obtain the credit for the benefits which English rule undoubtedly

³³⁴ Forrest, “The Indian Mutiny,” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 173 (April 1903): 564–82, 566.

confers upon countries which come under its influence.”³³⁵ *Seeta* is Taylor’s attempt to correct this defect.³³⁶

The colonial adventure tale becomes a natural outgrowth of an earlier tradition of historical fiction equally explicit in its pedagogical aims. Shuchi Kapila notes that “Most of Taylor’s writings present romantic versions of Indian subjects and Indian history in a style reminiscent of Walter Scott,” which as we have seen was viewed by nineteenth-century readers and critics as pedagogically useful.³³⁷ What it also shares with these other historical novels is the focus on the questions of subordination to and resistance against the state when traditional duties and practices are at issue.

Seeta’s plot is not known by many readers today, and a brief synopsis may be useful. Seeta, a young, Indian Hindu woman, in the very early pages of the novel, becomes the victim of a break-in and assault that kills her husband and wounds her. The murder, carried out by a Brahmin follower of Kali, Azráel Pandé, is contracted by a near relative of her husband who seeks redress for a perceived slight regarding the family inheritance. Seeta protects her infant son by pretending to be dead after she is wounded and managing to muffle the boy’s cries until the attackers leave. She is then called upon to provide her eyewitness testimony at which point she meets Cyril Brandon, the English

³³⁵ [Unknown], “Books of the Day,” *Country Life Illustrated* (10 April 1897): 392.

³³⁶ Herbert argues that the novel is a corrective on the issues of racism (p. 79), but I suggest that it does much more than that. The novel, in fact, calls for sympathetic understanding based on a respect for shared memories and communities built around them.

³³⁷ Shuchi Kapila, *Educating Seeta: The Anglo-Indian Family Romance and the Poetics of Indirect Rule*, Victorian Critical Interventions Series, ser. ed. Donald E. Hall (Columbus OH: Ohio State Univ. Press, 2010), p. 109. My conclusion is influenced by an earlier article by Kapila noted below.

magistrate. Pandé is sentenced to die following her testimony but later escapes prison, and the novel, then, proceeds by narrating three stories: the growing love and ultimate marriage between Cyril and Seeta, the agitation of the native population and subsequent revolt against the British, and Pandé's desire both to seek revenge against Seeta by enslaving her and taking her property and to take part in killing the British as an offer, the novel claims, to Kali.

The novel reveals a society on many levels divided by deep prejudices, petty squabbling, and irrational fear of the other. Seeta and Cyril's marriage becomes the site at which these divisions are explored. Their union, while supported by Seeta's closest relatives and local Hindu priests, and Cyril's closest friends the Mostyns, is viewed variously by some in the wider Hindu and British communities with concern, disapproval, and outright disdain. They are married according to Hindu tradition, but throughout the novel, their marriage is challenged on both Hindu and Christian grounds. Cyril's dying brother in England, for instance, explains that Seeta can never inherit the property of Hylton Hall, and he suggests that Cyril find a way to pay her off, so he can marry a "proper" English woman who can ascend to the position of Lady Hylton upon the older brother's death. Cyril's professional career is threatened because of the malicious rumors of an English woman whose racism leads her actively to work to divide the lovers by circulating false accounts of their relationship. And Seeta's family—her grandfather and great-aunt with whom she lived before and after her marriage to her first husband—are threatened with the loss of their caste and sentenced to atone for the

pollution caused by Seeta's marriage to the Englishman by making a pilgrimage to Benares. In the end, Seeta suffers an ultimately fatal blow as she moves to protect Cyril against a strike by her old enemy Pandé, when the novel moves beyond its focus on the family romance to national crisis.

The deathbed scene, while typical of many such Victorian scenes, is significant for its treatment of the potential last-minute conversion of Seeta to Christianity. The heroine dies, it seems, in the midst of a terrible internal struggle that is never fully resolved for those who stand vigil or for the readers. And the reader is made to understand that this struggle is one of commitment to a shared past with her family and the intimate connection she feels with her British husband. Her death, the suppression of the Indian Rebellion, and a reconceived relationship between India and Britain at novel's end are made to seem the result of a merging of shared goals for India's future with respect to its past. This is, of course, what one would expect in a novel written by a British civil servant.

The novel is distinctly about juxtapositions that call into question the alignment and realignment—the possibility of recombinations as we saw in the first chapter—of elements from the social memory of the community within the novel and with a potential reading public. The epigraph is a Shakespearean sonnet, gesturing toward a canonical tradition of British literature under which the colonial tale may be subsumed. Additionally, the narrative co-opts the native, Indian female protagonist for a Western and British audience. Seeta's testimony before an English colonial court, for instance,

affords Cyril Brandon an opportunity to place her within an aesthetic tradition familiar to English men and women. “For a native woman,” the narrator remarks, “Cyril Brandon had never seen anyone so fair or of so tender a tone of colour. Such, he remembered, were many of the lovely women of Titian’s pictures—a rich golden olive, with a bright carnation tint rising under the skin—and Seeta’s was like them” (p. 61). According to Kapila, whose “Educating Seeta: Philip Meadows Taylor’s Romances of Empire” is one of the few and certainly one of the most compelling readings of the novel and to which I am indebted, “The native woman’s beauty is accommodated within a European ideal, and even though she falls short of that ideal in shape and form, she makes up for it in sentiment and emotion.”³³⁸ While Seeta’s physical attributes are viewed by Brandon through the lens of Western aesthetics, the reader is also encouraged to read the tale through the lens of British fiction. Both the narrator and Brandon idealize Seeta in this first volume, and she essentially occupies the conventional space of the Victorian domestic heroine: she is beloved by all, a good mother, (was) a good wife, and even brings honor to her family through her steadfastness in court.

Her emotional life is also subject to the approval of the British reading public. The legal encounter, for instance, centers in the young woman’s testimony regarding her husband’s death. Seeta appears in court to provide evidence against the men who brutally murdered her husband at the request of his cousin, the leader of the murderers and robbers who holds a particularly powerful position as a follower of the goddess Kali.

³³⁸ Shuchi Kapila, “Educating Seeta: Philip Meadows Taylor’s Romances of Empire,” *Victorian Studies* 41.2 (Winter 1998): 211–41, 225.

In this juridical encounter between Pandé and Seeta, we come to understand the full force of the colonial text because Seeta is not only pitted against her fellow man but also positioned in a space of emotional and spiritual choice that will be exploited later in the text. Kali, as the black goddess of destruction, is juxtaposed figuratively with the fair, matronly (if even at seventeen), and beautiful Seeta. Kali is depicted as mad, hateful, vengeful, and sadistic. Her followers, readers are led to believe, are those who commit dangerous and desperate acts of brutality with a thirst for blood as their only motivating factor. Pandé, we are told, “might be well adored by his followers as an incarnation of power, and a fit executant of the will of the dread goddess he served” precisely because his obsession with revenge is only matched by his brutality (p. 13). Kali is worshipped as the “holy Mother” (p. 13), and in this she is made to occupy a position of contrast to the young mother Seeta, who is then called on to reject Kali and those who believe in her. While Seeta is not a follower of Kali, she is figuratively made to deny any possibility of the relationship between goddess and follower by testifying against the goddess’s votary. The vicious murder of her husband at the hands of Kali’s followers, her choice not to follow many of the proscriptions for widowhood such as shaving her head, and her subsequent testimony before an English magistrate are related moments in which the native woman-in-mourning is made to support the British Empire in opposition to native traditions.

Ultimately, the juridical encounter reveals a possible realignment of political allegiances—a kind of political conversion revealed through spiritual language—on the

part of Seeta. When Brandon, for instance, asks her to swear to tell the truth before God (in the singular), Seeta responds, “I will speak the truth . . . before the *gods* and you” (p. 62, emphasis added). As she recounts the murderers’ disregard for her plea to spare the child from death recalling the words “You know, sir, I could not make a more solemn appeal, and our fathers have told us that it is never refused,” she notes the ultimate betrayal of that tradition by her fellow countrymen (p. 63). This leads her to exclaim, perhaps subconsciously, on the next page: “I am only speaking the truth before you and God” (p. 64). Her language registers a monotheistic turn, shifting from the pantheon of Hindu deities toward a singular God. Her testimonial autograph marks a significant moment of personal agency. “With my own hand I wrote it, and I come of my own free will,” she says signing her testimony “Seeta, widow of Huree Das” (pp. 60–61). She claims an important legal identity—the widow—in this passage, but at the same time, she enhances that identity with an autonomous gesture toward “free will,” and we are told that on the one hand she worked to secure her son’s inheritance according to Hindu custom but on the other hand she would refuse to follow the widow’s tradition of shaving her head and going unadorned, a decision opposed to Hindu custom. Seeta is no traditional widow, and while readers are not given any specific reason for why this is so, we are meant to understand that her exceptionalism is key to her role in bringing the Victorian reader to sympathize with the native population separated geographically and temporally from Seeta’s India.

Seeta's social status as widow ultimately comes at great cost: the loss of her family and a constant fear of becoming outcast. It is a loss brought on, in part, by the determination of the author who seeks to place his subject within the ethnographer's grasp. There is no doubt that Taylor portrays many of his Indian characters sympathetically, but this tends to be characteristic of those jingoistic imperialists who believed that native populations were to be "civilized" according to English standards. Taylor's Seeta is presented as sympathetic not only because she is fair skinned but also because she is, by all English standards, a dutifully domestic woman. His portrayal of her conforms to the English model of womanhood present in Western literary traditions. As Kapila suggests, "Seeta exemplifies [the] Anglicist subject when her tentative acculturation into British social life is described as an awakening of her intellect. Her aspirations to the pleasures of Western arts and letters include learning English so that she can read 'the poetry of England.'"³³⁹ Seeta does more than present a model of womanhood, though: she is made to be the legitimating figure for England's civilizing mission once she becomes the wife of Cyril Brandon.

Seeta's inner struggles with Indian social memory and the temptation to be absorbed within the British traditions practiced by her husband make up what is called in the novel "the most momentous crisis of her life" (p. 391). The narrator explains this crisis for the reader in a retrospective of Seeta's deliberations following her death:

³³⁹ Kapila, "Educating Seeta," p. 227.

Nor is it needful for me to lay bare the struggles of that loving, pious heart more than I have already done in these imperfect pages. Such struggles, even in Christian hearts yearning to feel the truth, are often long and terrible; how much more, then, those of a heathen, with intellect and education powerful enough to understand it, and yet with every consideration, before held most sacred and precious, not only to be risked, but abandoned entirely for a new faith, and altogether new affections and associations. If she renounced Hindooism, she should be a stranger in her grandfather's home. She could not eat with them, or live with them, at all, as she had used to do. They might reproach her, and refuse to see her; and Wamun Bhut, her revered preceptor, would be grieved to the heart. Her old associates would despise her, for she knew how Christianity was esteemed among them—nay, how she had esteemed it herself, hardly a year ago. If Cyril died—and he might die before her—and she were a Christian, who could receive her, when her caste was gone? No penance, no fine, no entreating of the guild, or the Brahmins at Benares, could restore what she had designedly given up. She must live alone, as an outcast: and if she died, who would even bury her?

(p. 389)

The personal struggle of Seeta detailed above is significant for its drawing together of many of the concerns the Indian community had more broadly when it came to considering its relationship with the British community at the time of the Indian

Rebellion. Seeta's concerns about converting to Christianity are registered not in the language of gain but rather of loss, abandonment, and social isolation. The shifting of allegiances and associations, to use that popular late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century term, represented more than a leap of faith regarding doctrinal philosophy; it also required a belief in her fellow men and women to accept the radical change. Her struggles, in other words, reveal a personal longing to belong, to be a part of a group where her family memories, her Hindu way of life, are not at odds with her sexual desire or her husband's beliefs.

Her resistance to conversion in the end is viewed with disappointment both by her husband and the small British community to which she had been welcomed and by her smaller, Indian family of her grandfather and great-aunt. Her grandfather, in fact, comes to wish that she had converted to Christianity and been as fully accepted into the British community as that conversion would allow because he understood her tenuous position as a native, Hindu widow married to a Christian Englishman. Indeed, Seeta's position, in the end, is deeply troubling for a modern reader. She is never fully accepted into any of the communities presented in the novel. It would be simplistic to suggest that because of this, she must in the end die, but it is difficult to avoid reading just that into the novel.

Where Seeta ultimately flourishes is in the memory of the various characters. As her grandfather tells her husband when he attends an opening of a school dedicated to her memory before his final departure from India, "We have one memory in common which can never fade, and for all your love to her, and your confidence in me, I am most

grateful” (p. 430). A small memorial is erected to her memory near her and Cyril’s home in India attended by a Brahmin and his wife who were companions to Seeta when she was alive, and a portrait of her is hung above Cyril’s mantle, accompanied by botanical souvenirs he took from India in remembrance of his first wife. He tells his second wife, Grace Mostyn, who had befriended Seeta throughout the novel, that the leaves of these souvenirs are still sweet, “as sweet as her memory is to us both” (p. 441). The novel closes with a declaration of simultaneous acts of remembrance. As Cyril and Grace gaze upon Seeta’s portrait, we are told that “at the little altar—far away—Brahmins offer flowers and sing hymns to-day. And many a girl lays a garland there and prays to the sweet spirit, whose death she commemorates!” (p. 442).

Seeta is a novel flush with the objects of memory—memorials, portraits, floral mementos, and so on. It is a narrative that explores the relevance of these objects to the individual as well as the social dimension of memory in general. It is a novel that broadens the “one memory in common” of Seeta to include the memories of several communities in conflict with one another that the novel is intent on drawing together. One senses, in addition, that it is a novel that reflects the author’s own struggle with bridging his English heritage with his sympathy for the Indian people.

Taylor’s novel, Victoria’s correspondence, the other historical novels under examination here, and nineteenth-century theories of the past ultimately reveal a society in which memory was recognized as an important component not only to individual or personal subjectivity but also to communal identity. Nineteenth-century knowledge of

memory was widened beyond the psychological dimension that viewed memory as a storehouse of images, which contributed to the life story of an individual. Memory was, in fact, seen as a concept with the powers to draw together disparate groups along a broad social spectrum. The nineteenth-century historical novel explores this new sense of memory. By reading the historical novel alongside the philosophical developments in the study of memory, today's scholars of nineteenth-century British literature and culture have access into a conversation about the past that remains deeply influential on our present.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has sought to draw together two concepts—social memory and the nineteenth-century British historical novel—in order to argue that nineteenth-century debates about the past were being newly represented in the literary and cultural records. Wolf Lepenies has argued that the nineteenth century—in France, England, and Germany—witnessed the rise of an interdisciplinary interest in the phenomenon of social life that marked an era of rapid change, of industrialization, and of modernity and that literature was a powerful influence on the men and women who expressed this interest.³⁴⁰ Lepenies tells his readers, for instance, that the positivist Auguste Comte enjoyed the novels of Scott and praised the works of the woman with whom he fell in love, Clotilde de Vaux, who never returned his affection, believing that literature and affect had a profound role in an individual's life (a decision he came to after meeting Clotilde); while John Stuart Mill turned to the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge following a mental crisis in the 1840s. Lepenies suggests that literature was capable of altering the intensity of the philosophical empiricism that characterized many socio-philosophical movements of the nineteenth century. Even the Utilitarians, he notes, believed that the historical novel, when set far enough in the past, was an acceptable choice for literary pastime.

The historical novel was believed by many in the nineteenth century to stir the hearts and minds of its readers as this dissertation has attempted to show. Archibald Alison had argued that historical novels were capable of elevating our highest passions

³⁴⁰ Wolf Lepenies, *Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (1985; rpt. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992).

and sentiments, that through them we could feel with the past. Through the historical imagination, it was argued by a number of nineteenth-century literary critics, a talented novelist could set the past in relief for the reader. The reconstructive skills of these novelists were judged by their ability to put the reader face-to-face, as it were, with the historical personages who peopled the annals of history. This assessment was made based also on their attention and fidelity to historical detail, their delineation of the inner life of the individual and its role in the action of the historical epoch under examination, and their ability to “elevate” the emotions of the readers. Their success as historical novelists was also based on their ability to imbue the memories of the past with social relevance to the present and future.

Many, however, argued that the historical novel failed because of its lack of empirical methodology, its overdependence on outlining the ornamental decoration of an era rather than on capturing the spirit of the age, and its projection of modern ideas onto a bygone screen. As Leslie Stephen (1832–1904) declared in 1871, “Either the [historical] novel becomes pure cram, a dictionary of antiquities dissolved in a thin solution of romance, or, which is generally more refreshing, it takes leave of accuracy altogether and simply takes the plot and costume from history, but allows us to feel that genuine moderns are masquerading in the dress of the by-gone century.”³⁴¹ Yet at the very point he is writing his contemplation on the relevance of Scott to the modern era, he notes that there are Waverley Balls still being held. And as Chapter One of this dissertation makes

³⁴¹ Leslie Stephen, “Some Words about Sir Walter Scott,” *Littell’s Living Age* 111.1426 (7 October 1871): 51–61, 57.

clear, a large group in the United States was also erecting, at this same time, a monument to Scott and insisting on the importance of the artist both to contemporary and future generations.

The historical novelist was ultimately held to a higher standard than other novelistic forms, the historical drama, or the epic poem, a point not lost on literary critics throughout the century. A review of *Mademoiselle de La Fayette* (1813) by Madame de Genlis (1746–1830), notable for its appearance just before the publication of *Waverley*, makes it clear that the standards were uneven at the opening of the century:

Much has been said against the ingenious artifice of novelists, who blend fancied events with historic truths; it must be allowed that the combination is not without its disadvantages; and we believe, according to the principles of sound criticism, where the merits of both are in every other respect equal, the palm should be given to those novels which are entirely the work of imagination. Madame de Genlis has written several of this kind; however, it is remarkable that the same adherence to historical facts which is exacted of romance writers, should not be equally required in poets.

The epic poet is allowed to exaggerate, and even to misrepresent, historic truths in order to beautify his work; it is even one of the positive laws of the epic,

that its foundation should be historical, and yet that the truths of history should be veiled under the brilliant superstructure of ingenious fiction.³⁴²

And, as late as 1894, William James (1842–1910) noticed that the same uneven standards continued: “there has been a clear difference between the attitude of criticism to the historical novel, and its attitude to historical plays or poems in respect of the matter of accuracy. Poetry has been fully allowed to use all history as her storehouse of raw material, and to re-create after her fashion its heroes and heroines in her own image.” This generosity was not afforded the historical novel, and why this was so remained a question for practitioners and readers of the thoroughly nineteenth-century form.³⁴³

The shifting views on the historical novel can actually tell us quite a bit about those who stayed true to and those who strayed from an appreciation of the form. The historical novel can, in fact, tell us about what was deemed significant to nineteenth-century British social memory and how men and women may have perceived their membership in a social group based on their allegiance to or dismissal of the various “species of composition,” to use Archibald Alison’s term, that marked the nineteenth century. As I have argued in this dissertation, the historical novel, in fact, was participating in a debate regarding the degree to which that past was usable for the present based on a belief in historical continuity and viability.

³⁴² [Unknown], “Review of *Mademoiselle de La Fayette* by Madame de Genlis,” *The Analecta Magazine* 3 (1814): 226–30, 226.

³⁴³ William James, “The Historical Novel,” in *Romantic Professions and Other Papers* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1894), pp. 155–77, 161.

In an era known for great change, progress, and improvement, the return to the past for both political and aesthetic purposes was one way in which the men and women of the nineteenth century were attempting to maintain a connection to personal and communal identities that had been developed prior to and during times of transition. The historical novel augments this relation by describing a state of social crisis that treats crisis as the site at which collective bonds are revisited, perhaps even contested and resisted. The historical novel reveals that social memory grows out of this process, helps to define the group, and may even lead to new group formations. The representation of this process at work in the historical novel of nineteenth-century Britain is a powerful reminder of how the past continues to haunt our present, waiting for us to shape its value for our future.

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